STOURBRIDGE
CHRONICLE

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GRANDFATHER ROGER TURNS CRIMEFIGHTER

by Tom Mason

A STOURBRIDGE heating engineer turned crimefighter when he caught 12 illegal immigrants trying to get into Britain in the back of a freezer lorry.

Grandfather Roger Furnell, aged 52, was stuck in traffic on the M1 beside the lorry which had a German number plate, when he heard loud banging noises coming from inside.

Intrigued, he moved his car behind the seven-tonne truck. He called the police after spotting the back doors flexing as if someone was trying to get out.

Mr Furnell, of Withymoor Village, Brierley Hill, was asked by the police to follow the lorry for two junctions before officers took over and pulled the truck into Watford Gap services in Northamptonshire.

Inside, they found the illegal immigrants.

The incident happened as Mr Furnell, who works for RHF Heating in Enville Street, Stourbridge, was returning from a job in Hertfordshire.

Roger Furnell who turned crimefighter

Carjacking

And it is not the first time he has helped police – 10 years ago he chased off three men who attempted a carjacking in Dudley town centre.

He said: "I seem to have a habit of being in the right place at the right time – or is that the wrong place at the wrong time?

"I was stuck in traffic and I could not believe how loud the noise was, coming from the lorry.

"I thought it was a train going over tracks nearby, but it obviously wasn't, so I went behind the lorry to check it. I saw the doors flexing as if someone was trying to get out.

"Whoever it was appeared to be knocking seven bells of hell out of the lorry. It may have been whoever was inside thought the lorry had come to a stop or it was getting cold inside. Whatever it was, I decided to call the police."

Mr Furnell later received a call thanking him for his help.

The Home Office said 12 people – 10 from Iran, one from Syria and one from Afghanistan – were arrested on suspicion of immigration offences after police searched a lorry at Watford Gap.

Six were later released on immigration bail while their cases are dealt with, four remain in immigration detention and two have been assessed as minors and passed to social services.

Northamptonshire Police said the driver of the lorry was released without charge.

Roman apology for ice cream rip-off

Roger, Wendy, Joyce and Stephen Bannister, who paid the equivalent of £54 for just four ice cream cones

TWO couples from Wordsley who were ripped off in Rome when they were charged more than £50 for four ice creams, have been invited back to the Italian capital by the apologetic mayor.

Roger, Wendy, Stephen and Joyce Bannister were shocked when they were charged 64 euros – £54 – for the ice cream cones near the Spanish Steps.

When the Mayor, Gianni Alemanno , who is up for re-election, heard about it, he got his representative to issue his invitation.

Roger and Wendy, of Cot Lane, were visiting Rome with Roger's brother, Stephen, and his wife Joyce, of Sandringham Road, when they found themselves at the centre of an international incident over the ice creams.Businessman Roger, aged 58, ordered the cones, but they were all horrified at bill.

After he queried 'how much?' the woman assistant at the Antica Roma shop slapped down the change without a 'thank you'.

Limousine

Roger, chief executive officer of Pressvess Ltd, in Stallings Lane, Kingswinford, has since received calls from an agent for the mayor, who apologised and invited the couples to return.

"He says the mayor will send a limousine for us, treat us to an ice cream and a round of golf," said Mr Bannister. "We are trying to fit in a date to take up their offer."

Mayor Gianni Alemanno

Hospital's new ways to boost patients

VISITS from gospel singers, manicurists and an animal therapy dog are being brought in to make stays at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital better for patients.

Staff are trying to improve patient experience and have been working with the Kissing it Better charity to invite community volunteers and groups to entertain patients.

Students from Dudley College have been providing hand massages and make-up for female patients and Buster the dog from Pets as Therapy has been making visits to the wards.

Bosses have also introduced welcome leaflets for each ward with information such as visiting times, mealtime routines, and ward contact numbers.

And there have been other improvements. Chief executive Paula Clark said: "With patients' help we have drawn up an action plan and have ordered 30 more wheelchairs for main reception and worked on our hearing loops system.

The hospital is also looking at revamping its meal service. Fresh food prepacked into individual meals is being piloted at Russells Hall to widen the choice offered to patients.

Patients have been asked for feedback and bosses have held taste tests.

● Gowns – Page 3

Death crash man charged

A MAN has been charged with offences in relation to a crash in which a Kingswinford woman died.

The crash, on the A449 at Cookley on December 8, claimed the life of Samantha Jennings, aged 26, who was a front seat passenger in a Vauxhall Astra which left the road and hit a tree near the Island Pool pub.

A 22-year-old Stourbridge man was this week charged with causing death by careless driving and possessing cannabis.

He will appear before Kidderminster magistrates on May 30.

Funding hope for expansion at school

MORE than 130 school places for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities will be created in the Dudley borough under new plans.

Council bosses say there is a growing demand for high needs education for students, aged 16 to 19.

They want to create extra places at Pens Meadow Special School, in Wordsley, Stourbridge College,and Dudley College.

A total of 235 spots will be created and the council is planning to submit three seperate bids to the Education Funding Agency to cover the costs. They are applying for £592,000 to provide 45 places for over 16s at Pens Meadow.

A former hospital building near the site will be transformed into classrooms for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

A £540,000 grant would be used for an independent living unit for 150 students at Stourbridge College.

The council hopes to secure £516,000 to refurbish a building at Dudley College to provide 40 places.

Dudley's education chief Councillor Tim Crumpton said in a report that the plans were aimed at increasing choice, based on evidence of growing numbers of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities in Dudley's schools.

New plea for Hippodrome

COUNCIL bosses are being urged to rethink a decision to demolish Dudley Hippodrome.

A case put forward by The Friends of Dudley Hippodrome to reopen the theatre was rejected as unviable.

The Theatres Trust has now called for a meeting with the council to discuss options for the building.

Mark Price of the preservation group, said: "The key thing is keeping the building up, because once it has gone, it's gone."

● Dismay – Page 3

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CONTACT US

Have you got a story or an event you would like covered? The Chronicle and the Express & Star have reporters in Stourbridge who can help:

Tom Mason: 01902 319466
tom.mason@expressandstar.co.uk

Charlotte Lilley: 01902 319490
charlotte.lilley@expressandstar.co.uk

Will Ackermann: 01384 353213
will.ackermann@expressandstar.co.uk

Heather Large 01384 353203
heather.large@expressandstar.co.uk

Alex Ross 01384 353207
alex.ross@expressandstar.co.uk

Louise Jew 01384 353201
louise.jew@expressandstar.co.uk

Andrew Turton 01384 353202
andrew.turton@expressandstar.co.uk

Lee Watton 01384 353230
l.watton@expressandstar.co.uk

Sharon Marris 01384 353209
sharon.marris@expressandstar.co.uk

We are always keen to hear about your news or views. Email your information and pictures to *stourbridge.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk*

Advertising:
Rebecca Vincze 01384 399901
r.vincze@expressandstar.co.uk

Colin Bailey (Property) 01922 444331
c.bailey@expressandstar.co.uk

Andy Mullett (Motoring) 01384 353256
a.mullett@expressandstar.co.uk

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More people going to church services

THE number of people going to church services in some parts of the Midlands has risen by more than three per cent.

In the Diocese of Worcester, which covers Worcestershire, Dudley and parts of Sandwell and Wolverhampton, attendance at services rose from 14,600 to 15,100.

In the Diocese of Lichfield, the average weekly attendance figures are also rising, but the number of people going to Sunday services has remained static.

According to the latest statistics collected from parishes in 2011 almost half of Church of England dioceses saw a growth in church attendance.

The Bishop of Worcester, The Rt Revd Dr John Inge, said he believed that one factor which could be attracting people to churches in Worcestershire and Dudley is that church members are increasingly getting involved with their communities with such things as running food banks and taking school assemblies.

He said: "When someone comes to church, they are welcomed by people whom they have already seen helping out in the neighbourhood."

In the Diocese of Lichfield, spokesman Simon Jones said the growth in average weekly attendance could be down to people going to more midweek services, rather than traditional Sunday services.

He added that the number of baptisms in the county was higher than the national figure – with 14.8 per cent of babies being baptised compared to 12 per cent nationally.

Market traders cool on free car park trial

A FREE car parking trial aimed at boosting trade at a Brierley Hill market has instead improved business for town centre shops, market chiefs have said.

Bosses at Concord Market say while the initiative has benefited shopkeepers, the scheme have not proved as fruitful for stallholders.

They are now pulling together feedback from business owners before considering whether to make the trial permanent.

Market owner Shane Birch-Bastock said the trial ran for two months at its 70-space car park behind the indoor market off High Street.

He said: "A lot of the shopkeepers in that end of town said it improved their trade but the market traders here say they didn't really notice too much of a difference.

"In an ideal world if all the car parks in Brierley Hill did it then it wouldn't have been so bad and it would benefit the town.

"But with just one car park it's not really fair." He said customers would also be asked their views before a decision is made.

Benefit

Mr Birch-Bastock, also head of the Brierley Hill Traders' Association, had been inspired to trial the free parking to boost trade, amid news that, with 29.6 per cent of shops empty, the town had one of the worst-performing retail scenes of any small town in the country.

Mr Birch-Bastock said his car park, which is between Venture Way and Mill Street, was the last in the town to start charging for parking in 2004 and it was a decision he made reluctantly.

Since then customers had to pay £1 to park but they could get the money refunded if they bought goods from the market. This is the system being used while Mr Birch Bastock decides his next move.

He said: "If it doesn't work, we may have a proper pay and display or maybe half of the car park could be done one way and the other half done another way.

"We will now look at different options and find out what customers would like."

Apprentice flop outlines business plans

The losing Apprentice team – Tim Stillwell, Francesca MacDuff-Varley, left, and Rebecca Slater

TIM STILLWELL, the second person booted off the TV show The Apprentice, wants to expand his business – and Stourbridge is one of his possible target markets.

The 24-year-old was kicked off the show by Lord Alan Sugar after his team's bid to sell flavoured beer went wrong.

Undettered, he said he would turn his attention back to the food industry, opening his first branch of Burrito Kitchen at Merry Hill, employing 12 people.

Speaking from London, he said: "The plan is to expand in the Black Country so, after Burrito Kitchen opens at Merry Hill, I want to have the next branch in a two-mile radius. That might be Stourbridge or maybe Dudley High Street."

Mr Stillwell also plans to move from his home in The Jewellery Quarter to Dudley for the venture, which is to launch in early June.

He said: "I'm willing to do the hard work and get my hands dirty.

Research

"I want to be there and be able to talk to customers and, if there's something wrong, I want to be able to fix it for the next day."

Mr Stillwell said he had done market research in the Black Country before deciding it was the best place to launch his business.

He said: "Merry Hill is always busy and it's a great location. I'm really excited."

Viewers saw Mr Stillwall fired after being chosen by Lord Sugar to be project manager of the girls' team, Evolve.

Under his leadership, the girls struggled to make their chosen beer flavour, rhubarb and caramel, wasting dozens of litres of the drink after mixing up recipe calculations.

They then failed to choose good locations to sell their product, called Rhubarb & Riches, trying the Kent Beer Festival in Putney which was later described by Lord Sugar as 'a glorified pub' and a Richmond wine bar.

Library is to host visit by author

ACTOR turned children's author George Layton will visit Stourbridge Library on Saturday as part of Big Book Fortnight.

Mr Layton appeared in Doctor in the House, It Ain't Half Hot Mum and most recently in EastEnders as Norman Simmonds.

He also famously narrated the children's TV Series Pigeon Street. His books include The Fib and Other Stories, The Swap and Other Stories and The Trick and Other Stories.

The tales describe family life in post-war northern England. The books are so successful that they now form part of the national curriculum.

Mr Layton will be at Stourbridge for a talk aimed at families with children aged seven and over at 11am, followed by a book signing opportunity.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for housing, libraries and adult learning, said: "We are very excited to welcome George to Stourbridge. He is a face many will recognise from his TV work and many children and parents will be familiar with his books."

Places must be reserved by contacting the library on 01384 812945.

Hospice to get £2,000 donation

A CHARITY in Stourbridge has benefited from the town football club's FA Cup fairy-tale run more than two years ago.

Stourbridge FC bosses have awarded a £2,000 charity fund, given to them by the Football Association, to the Mary Stevens Hospice.

The cash was provided to the club to donate to a worthy cause after the side reached the first round of the FA Cup in 2011.

They won the tie against Plymouth Argyle, but the Southern Premier League part-timers bowed out to Stevenage in the next round.

Club chairman Andy Pountney said: "The board of directors quickly and unanimously decided to award the money to Mary Stevens Hospice.

"The staff and volunteers do such wonderful work."

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MPs will hand back £484,000

MPs have agreed to hand back more than £484,000 of profits from taxpayer-funded homes.

The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (Ipsa), set up in the wake of the expenses scandal, has detailed repayments by 29 politicians.

The watchdog moved to ban the use of Commons expenses to pay mortgage interest in May 2010, in the wake of public fury over 'flipping' and other abuses.

However, transitional arrangements were put in place permitting MPs elected before 2010 to keep claiming the money up to last August – as long as they agreed to return any potential capital gain.

No MPs from the Black Country or Staffordshire were asked to pay money back but Wolverhampton South East MP Pat McFadden was revealed to have claimed £14,137.48 in mortgage interest costs between 2010 and 2012, during the transitional period.

Some 71 MPs received £926,000 in allowances for mortgage interest during the transition period. The properties were formally valued at the beginning and the end, and the MPs were given until November 30 to return a proportion of any gain.

Memorabilia at libraries

MEMORABILIA packs containing copies of newspapers with major events and collections themed on days gone by are now available for loan from Dudley libraries.

The 26 individual packs cover themes such as the 1950s, a 1960s childhood, the RAF at war and Christmas past.

Newspapers available include those covering the Queen's coronation in 1953, the Battle of Britain in 1940 and Victory in Europe in 1945.

For further information call Sue Harper on 01384 818360.

Visit over noise

THE chief executive of a train firm is to visit a Dudley railway station after residents complained about noise. It comes after Stourbridge's MP Margot James presented a petition signed by more than 170 residents who live by the Stourbridge Junction station to the chief executive of Chiltern Railways Rob Brighouse.

New gowns to protect patients' modesty

OUTPATIENTS at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital could be given new outfits to wear during treatment to protect their dignity.

Hospital bosses are considering giving patients new outfits similar to medical scrubs, instead of the traditional gowns that open at the back.

Staff have been looking to replace those gowns which are considered by many to be too revealing.

They are providing double gowns to patients to protect their modesty when they visit the hospital and have to undress for tests and x-rays. But staff are now looking at alternatives to make people feel more comfortable.

In-patients who do not take their own nightwear, are already provided with unisex pyjamas if they want them.

And the hospital's chief executive Paula Clark said: "Our patients' privacy and dignity is very important to the Dudley Group.

"We are looking into the practicalities of introducing suits similar to medical scrubs worn by theatre staff, to replace double gowning. At present, patients who require an x-ray, CT scan, MRI scan or fluoroscopy are given two gowns to ensure their dignity is respected at all times."

Appropriate

Ms Clark added: "Double gowns are used in outpatients where patients come into hospital in their own clothes and are required to undress, for example, to have an x-ray, and where they may need to walk from a changing room to an imaging suite.

"Double gowns are not always practical or appropriate," she said. "For example, a practitioner would need complete access to the chest area of a patient having an echocardiogram or ECG.

"These patients do not have to leave the room in which they need to undress."

A survey from April 2012 to February 2013 showed that 88 per cent of patients said they were given enough privacy when discussing their condition or treatment.

And almost 91 per cent of patients said they felt they were treated with respect and dignity while they were in hospital.

Dismay over decision that Hippodrome will be levelled

AN ENTERTAINER and an academic from the Black Country have reacted with dismay to the decision to pull down the former Dudley Hippodrome.

Dudley Council has agreed to go ahead with its plans to demolish the venue on Castle Hill after snubbing a business case by campaigners to reopen the attraction.

Council leader David Sparks described the campaigners plan as unviable and said the council would move forward with a proposal to knock the site down and replace it with a car park.

The decision was made despite an 18-month campaign by the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome – led by Geoff Fitzpatrick and supported by more than 6,000 people.

The group, also backed by the Theatre Trust, gained access to the Hippodrome and carried out in-depth research before placing a business case to the council to reopen it.

Now, entertainers and historians voiced deep disappointment at the decision, describing it as a 'blow for the heritage of the West Midlands'.

Audience

Black Country comic Alan 'Aynuk' Smith was in the audience to see Laurel and Hardy and Bob Hope at the Hippodrome as a child.

Other stars to appear on the venue's stage before it closed in 1964 were Judy Garland, Bing Crosby and Tommy Cooper.

Mr Smith, aged 75, from Netherton, said: "I feel very sad because I do think we need a theatre of that calibre.

"The ones we have in Dudley either do not have the capacity or are not designed for proper stage shows – it will be a big shame when it is knocked down.

"It is all down to austerity, I really do believe it could have been the centre of entertainment for the West Midlands.

"The place was magic – but it does not surprise me. We are losing so many good things from the past, it is all down to finance."

Black Country historian Professor Carl Chinn met with the campaigners and saw their business plan, which he described as solid and not based on hope. He said: "I am deeply disappointed and feel this marks a blow for the heritage of the West Midlands, particularly for the people of Dudley – this is a sad day.

"The campaigners in my view put forward a solid, strong and exciting case and I feel this decision to reject it will be regretted by the council in future years.

The former Dudley Hippodrome building in Castle Hill, Dudley, which campaigners would have liked to see restored

"The decision to knock down an eye-catching building which could have been used for community purposes, for meeting rooms, for charity events, to go ahead and do that and knock it down – words fail me." He added: "I would like to record my appreciation to the campaigners because I feel they worked so hard to create a business case which was not just based on hope, but business projection and proper research."

Following the Hippodrome's closure, the building was transformed into a bingo hall, but this closed in September 2009.

A year later Dudley Council purchased the site as part of its regeneration scheme in Castle Hill to increase visitors to Dudley Zoo and the Black Country Museum. Former council leader Les Jones soon unveiled plans to knock the building down, before the campaign by the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome was started up in December 2011.

The group submitted its final version of a business plan to the council in November. The council received an assessment report by a consultancy firm on the case last month, before it came to its decision.

Professor Carl Chinn

Aynuk, alias Alan Smith

The Dudley Hippodrome from October 1970

NEWS in brief

Charity knitting sisters need wool

TWO sisters who have raised more than £37,000 for charity by knitting are appealing for more wool.

Yvonne Smart, aged 55, from Kingswinford, and Cathy Glear, a 59-year-old fosterer, from Netherton, helped by around 20 volunteers, knit and sell goods for the Midlands Air Ambulance. Their wares are on sale in Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley, and because of great demand, they need more wool.

To donate visit www.midlandsairambulance.com, or call 0800 840 2040.

Ex-leader parts with Tory group

A FORMER council leader in Dudley has resigned from the borough's Conservative group amid a row over national politics 'dominating the council chamber'.

Councillor Les Jones, who will now stand as an Independent Conservative, said he had become fed up with local issues taking a backseat during debates.

"I've seen the growing trend of national politics dominating local business in the chamber. I don't believe in this."

School team in final of awards

THE upper school team from Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School, Love Lane, Stourbridge are in the finals of the 2013 Pearson Teaching Awards.

Their nomination is in the school team of the year for their innovative morning modules, which included bow-making. The modules aim to inspire creativity. Winners will be announced on May 17.

Online manual for police officers

WEST Midlands Police officers will be able to access an online handbook that provides them with information on custody procedures and interview techniques.

The force recently renewed its subscription to the Police Visual Handbook, with information on law and codes of practice.

MP gives backing

DUDLEY South MP Chris Kelly has welcomed the new Technical Baccalaureate, announced by the Government. It combines a vocational qualification, a core maths qualification and an extended project to text literacy skills.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

JUST back from five days in Rome, I encounter a curious phenomenon which tends to happen after holidays. The bathroom scales have malfunctioned.

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I USED to travel a lot but it takes only a couple of Boeing-free years to forget the first rule of being abroad: The friendlier the locals seem, the more careful you should be. In the Via Cavour, like an idiot, I nodded vaguely at some grinning waiter's offer of "a very special wine for you" and was landed with an £18 bill for a half-bottle of dismal plonk before you could say Rimini. Later, a fawning café manager, smarming around the tables like a buttered snail, became our new best friend and offered me a complimentary glass of grappa. Examining the bill later, we found my free drink cost me £5. Lessons? Agree to nothing until you have seen the menu. Always ask for the "official receipt," not the scribbled scrap they prefer. And always decline the bread basket (no pane, grazie), unless you seriously want to pay £3 for four slices.

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MY indignation at getting ripped off was made much more bearable by the usually canny Mrs Rhodes's purchase of a tiny travel torch from a Roman shopkeeper. He smiled sweetly and rooked her for £10. It reminded me of the old guide to haggling in foreign parts: If they ask 10, they mean eight, so they want six and it's worth four, so you offer two. It rarely works but it's fun.

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WE WERE in Rome at the same time as Roger Bannister and three other Brits from Wordsley, Stourbridge who hit the headlines this week for being charged £54 for four portions of ice-cream. A Rome city councillor has described it as a scandal but the ice-cream stall owner, utterly unrepentant, says: "No-one forced them to order big ice-creams." True enough. And no-one forces tourists to go to Rome. The city's economy is stagnant and the Romans desperately need tourist money. It doesn't take too many stories like Roger Bannister's to make other trippers decide to go elsewhere.

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MAY 16 has been designated National Aperitif Day. I assume it's sponsored by the British Dental Association.

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CHARACTERS of our time. Columnist Mary Riddell identifies the saviour Labour has in mind to mend the broken economy. The Growth Fairy.

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THE DUCHESS of Cornwall attended the State Opening of Parliament, wore a tiara and sat close to the Queen. She becomes more regal with every public event. Yet the Prince of Wales's official website is still insisting: "It is intended that The Duchess will be known as HRH The Princess Consort when The Prince of Wales accedes to The Throne." Does anyone seriously believe this? Bit by bit, as memories of Diana fade, our nation is being groomed for the prospect of Queen Camilla. And whyever not?

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FIGURES obtained under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that hundreds of thousands of crimes, including 90 per cent of thefts from vehicles in London, are "screened out" by police as not being worth detailed investigation. A spokesman for the Association of Chief Police Officers says: "It should be emphasised that any crime that presents solvability factors should receive appropriate investigation." Does anyone investigate crimes against the English language?

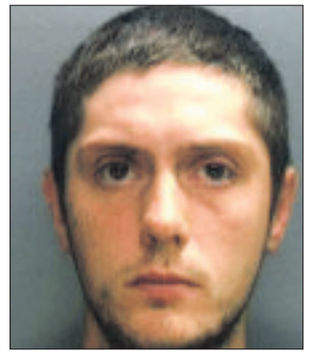
Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Axe-wielding hooded thugs smash way into shops

Andrew Scanlon – robbed a Co-op store

Anthony Everitt – axe above his head

Jake Williams – terrifying attack



Stuart Plant – admitted conspiracy

Jail for gang members who left their victims terrified

by John Scott

THE raids were over in minutes but the terror will live with their victims for years.

The hooded and masked gang burst or smashed their way into shops in the Black Country and Staffordshire wielding an axe and screaming abuse and threats.

They vaulted the serving counter as shocked staff, customers and even children cowered for cover, then tore cigarettes from the display cabinets and hurled the packets into dustbins and collapsible laundry bags.

The thugs also grabbed cash from either the safe or till before fleeing in a waiting car with a getaway driver at the wheel.

They deliberately targeted convenience stores where mainly women worked and struck around opening or closing time when fewer staff were on duty. One shop had already shut by the time they arrived and so they drove their car through the locked front door tearing it off its hinges.

Significant

Shops at 24-hour garages were also hit along with a branch of JD Sports where £6,280 worth of clothing was taken. Terrified women staff and customers at the stores were warned they would be 'cut' or killed if they did not follow orders.

Mr Gareth Walters, prosecuting, said: "The choice of an axe was significant because this had a much greater capacity to terrify than something like a simple iron bar. Many people, staff and customers were very frightened."

A gang struck 22 times between May 24 and September 22 last year escaping with at least £56,000 worth of cigarettes and £12,500 cash Wolverhampton Crown Court heard last week as four members were jailed. They admitted various involvement in eight of them – and not all were linked to all of those – but there was 'strong evidence' of a close association between them through phone traffic, the court heard.

Anthony Everitt, aged 35, was the raider with the axe when he struck with at least two other unidentified masked men at the Tesco Express store in Dudley Road, Halesowen, at 9pm on August 21. A member of staff, Claire Jones, was moving towards the exit when she came face to face with Everitt who brandished the axe over his head and screamed: "Get back or I will stab you."

Jake Williams, 22, Stuart Plant, 23, and other masked men armed with an axe and hammer robbed the Spa in Castle Street, Coseley, at 8.30pm on September 11 and the pair were in the gang that struck again later the same day at Tesco Express in Walsall Road, Great Wyrley, at 11pm after it had been locked up for the night.

Williams is the only crook known to be involved in the terrifying attack on the shop at Murco 24 hour petrol station in Bloomfield Road, Tipton, at 3am on September 16. Three days later he was in the team that kicked in a window at 3am before bursting into the shop of the 24-hour Shelfield Service Station in Lichfield Road, Walsall.

But the net was closing in on him. On September 19 he had been seen in the early hours taking a bag of cigarettes to the Bloomfield convenience store in Bloomfield Road just yards from the Murco Filling Station raided three days earlier.

Detectives said that there were sufficient similarities to conclude that 22 crimes were committed by members of the same gang.

Williams, from Meldon Drive, Bilston, Everitt, 35, of Wallace Road, and Stuart Plant, 24, from Daley Road, both Bradley, each admitted conspiring with others to commit robberies. Williams was jailed for eight years eight months after admitted taking part in a further five raids in 11 days while Everitt confessed to involvement in two more and was locked up for seven years three months. Plant also pleaded guilty to being on two further robberies and was sent to prison for six years four months.

Andrew Scanlon, of Oak Road,Tipton, admitted robbing the Dudley Co-op and was sentenced to four years. Binning, aged 33 of Pond Lane, Parkfields, who ran Bloomfield convenience pleaded guilty to handling stolen goods and was jailed for two years.

A CCTV image shows a raider loading cigaretts in a laundry bag

A raider carries a distinctive collapsible bag in the shop

The raider leaps over the shop counter to escape

Hard work starting for new councillor

Councillor Rachel Jenkins

THE hard work is just starting for a mother-of-two who was a surprise winner in the recent county council elections.

Rachel Jenkins won as an independent after helping to fight plans for a major housing estate in her village.

She ousted Conservative Ed Moore to win the Clent Hills ward in the Worcestershire County Council elections.

She shocked many after overturning a 1,315 majority to win by 515 votes. She was one of the campaigners against the plans by developer Cala Homes to build a 175-home estate on land in Hagley, near Stourbridge.

The controversial plans were given the go-ahead earlier this year,

Councillor Jenkins paid tribute to her fellow campaigners who contributed to her victory.

And now she said the work would start in earnest with traffic problems and air pollution in the village among her top priorities.

"I was was stunned to win because this seat had been held by Conservatives for decades," she said. "But it shows how strong people feel. People felt they hadn't been listened too, especially about the Cala Homes development.

"I have to thank everyone who supported me and helped me over the last few weeks."

She added: "I very much want to champion people's voices on a county level and try to make people listen."

Mrs Jenkins, of Birmingham Road, Hagley, says residents have grown increasingly concerned with air quality around the village. This is exacerbated by traffic queuing around the roundabout at the junction of the A456 and A491 taking motorists from Stourbridge through the village to Worcester.

But she says extra safety problems on the main route caused by traffic speeding at other times of the day has also been highlighted as an issue.

"There are a lot of motorists speeding down there and it is something that needs looking at," she said.

Society's helping hand for food bank

A BUILDING society has been named as a drop-off point for a community food bank.

Yorkshire Building Society, in Stourbridge High Street, has opened its doors to donations of non-perishable items to support the Black Country Food Bank.

Around 120 items have already been collected by staff at the building society, including tinned foods, pasta and dried goods.

Branch manager Kulvinder Kullar said: "We're committed to supporting residents and are delighted to be a drop- off point. We have had a great response from customers so far and would like to encourage anyone, whether customers or not, to pop in and donate what they can to help people."

Staff have visited the food bank at St John's Church to drop off the collected donations but a dedicated food collection box will remain at the branch. Food Bank spokesman Pat Johnson said: "Convenient drop off points are a great way of making it easier for people who really want to help, but might be pushed for time.

"We're really pleased the society has got behind the initiative. It makes a difference to those who need it most."

The food bank aims to give needy families food for three days so a longer-term solution can be found.

Children's centre gets £500 boost

SUPPORTERS of a non-league football club have helped raise £500 for a children's residential centre.

Members of Halesowen Town's supporters' group, The Yeltz Trust, staged events to help bring in donations from fans.

Cash raised at events, including the trust's fun day, has been donated to staff at Sunfield Children's Home in Clent, near Stourbridge. The home, off Woodman Lane, provides care to young people who have complex learning difficulties.

Staff and children from the centre were invited to the club's ground The Grove as guests for the game against Carlton Town last month.

Jobs created as business booms for rescued firm

A BUSINESS in Lye that was struggling and had to be rescued in a multi-million pound deal is booming again.

The deal put together by three Black Country entrepreneurs saved 70 jobs at Quality Metal Products.

One of the three, Neil Higgitt, said that they were now planning significant investment in plant and machinery at the Timmins Road factory.

Ten new staff have been taken on since the deal last July. Another three full time staff are being added this month at the engineering company which has become a profitable success story.

A phone call and a deadline saw Mr Higgitt, Mike Wright and Peter Hargreaves step in to save the locker and workbench manufacturer.

Mr Higgitt said: "Everything happened so quickly.

"The American owners contacted me and after a meeting made it clear that unless a deal could be done they were prepared to close the manufacturing plant within weeks.

"So our management team jumped into action to save this great manufacturer. We had just six weeks to bring the deal together.

"We have a great team, and with the help of Peter Waldron and Hannah Scott from Waldron Solicitors, and Mark Caulkin, the regional director from NatWest Bank, the deal was done within the six week deadline."

Turnover

A 25,000 sq ft new warehouse area is being fitted out at the factory.

Quality Metal Products had been losing up to £80,000 a month before the takeover, but it is now back in the black and delivering strong sales.

"We have had tremendous support from our customers and we have focused on the quality and service aspect of the business. Things are going very well," said Mr Higgitt.

The former US owners had contacted Mr Higgitt because both he and Mr Wright had previously worked at QMP before leaving to take over Workplace Products, in Aldridge, in 2004.

Workplace Products is an industrial mail order catalogue company and one of QMP's biggest customers.

Mr Higgitt said: "We are responsible for about £400,000 of their turnover, but the total turnover at QMP is around £5.5 million, supplying other recognised trade dealers.

"So they are selling to our competitors, and we have to run the businesses completely separately."

Lawyer Peter Waldron said: "This deal was put together in such a fast time to save this great company. We were delighted to be part of the rescue plan. "

Mark Caulkin of NatWest added: "The banking world has been in the spotlight over the last few years for many of the wrong reasons and we were only too pleased to back this deal."

Mr Wright, the group financial director, said: "This was a substantial investment by us.

"But with the support of NatWest RBS, especially Mark Warwood of RBS, Waldrons and some good negotiating, we were pleased to save QMP."

Since the rescue plan QMP has refocused on its core business and customers, and orders have been strong. Group sales director Peter Hargreaves said: "We are focusing on our core values of quality and service combined with competitive pricing.

"We would like to thank all our customers for their support over the past few months."

The management team: Mike Wright, left, Neil Higgitt and Peter Hargreaves

Assembling lockers in the Lye factory

Welder Michael Davis in action

NEWS in brief

US flag will fly as tribute in city run

THE stars and stripes will be put up on the route of Wolverhampton Marathon and participants asked to salute it as they pass to pay tribute to the victims of the Boston bombings.

Organisers say they want to remember the runners who lost their lives or were injured when the US city was hit by a double bomb blast.

Wolverhampton Marathon's Planning Committee will respect the victims of the attacks by planting the US flag outside Aldersley Stadium.

Heads team up for new scheme

HEADTEACHERS from schools across the Dudley borough, Halesowen College and the University of Worcester have launched a new scheme.

Pupils from Leasowes, Hillcrest and Wordsley schools have been taking part in taster days for youngsters identified as gifted and talented, staged at the college and university.

The groups are learning skills including film making, mathematics, geography, English, German and history.

Oxfam group in Zumbathon

THE Stourbridge Oxfam fundraising group is holding a charity Zumbathon on Saturday.

It will run from 4pm until 7pm at Holy Trinity Amblecote Church Hall in Vicarage Road.

Refreshments are available throughout the event for participants and supporters, including a non-alcoholic cocktail fountain, tea, coffee and cakes.

Stores look for causes to help

SUPERMARKETS in Stourbridge and Dudley are looking for charities to support – and are calling on their customers to help.

Bosses at Sainsbury's in Amblecote and Merry Hill are asking shoppers for nominations.

Log on to www.sainsburys.co.uk/localcharity

Run raise £6,000

A FUN run which brought hundreds of visitors into Halesowen and raised £6,000 for good causes will be expanded, say organisers as they announce details of this year's event.

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW WITH MARK ANDREWS

HERE'S one for the technically savvy, cost-conscious music lovers among you.

The financial website lovemoney.com reports on an exciting new way to listen to music, and all completely free of charge.

"The Twitter app analyses tweets to decide what music users will like. You can also see what kind of music your favourite artists are listening to and find out about emerging 'rtists which are 'hidden in the tweets'," it tells us.

Apparently, the 'Twitter app' lets you listen to a preview of a song, but to hear it in full you'll have to go to Spotify, Rdio or iTunes.

Now, I have no idea what any of that means, but it does sound good. Learn it off by heart and recite it in the right circles, and you will boost your street cred no end as a young, happening dude with your finger on the pulse of modern culture and technology. However, I can foresee one or two problems.

First of all, while I don't know precisely what a 'Twitter app' is, I am fairly certain it requires either a computer or one of those funny phones with a touch-screen the size of a television. For those who own neither, this 'free music' does not sound very free at all.

But secondly, I don't think this is actually very new. I have had a small portable device which allows me to listen to unlimited free music for many years.

It's called a radio.

❑❑❑❑❑❑

WHO'D be David Moyes, eh? Well in a job where some managers make millions simply by getting the sack, quite a few of us actually.

But while he has achieved remarkable things in his 11 years at Everton, he will find expectations much higher at Manchester United.

Those fans in the Home Counties are notoriously hard to please.

❑❑❑❑❑❑

INCIDENTALLY, Sir Alex Ferguson was presented with a gold watch to mark his retirement. In a blistering farewell speech, he complained it was seven minutes fast.

❑❑❑❑❑❑

TALKING of gold, did you clock the bling Prince Charles was wearing at the State opening of Parliament?

Given that, unlike his father and younger brother Andrew, he has never been decorated for war service, one does wonder how he has earned all those medals. Maybe he bought them off Gordon Brown when he was selling our gold off cheap.

Perhaps it gives us a clue to how the Government is going to fund all those promises made during the Queen's speech. Charlie's off to Cash Converters.

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TO celebrate Local Newspaper Week we are giving you the chance to snap up a £100 gift card to spend in your local Marks & Spencer store.

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Entrants must be aged 18 or over. Closing date for entries is Friday, May 24 2013. The first correct entry selected after the closing date will receive the prize. The winner will be notified by post. There is no cash alternative and the prize is non-transferable. Employees (or their immediate relatives) of the MNA group of companies may NOT enter. The Editor's decision is final. The winner must be prepared to take part in any relevant publicity.

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LOCAL NEWSPAPER WEEK

Demand for local news has never been higher

Injured footballer who still delivers

Determined delivery boy Keegan was not going to let a broken leg stop people getting their Chronicle as CHARLOTTE LILLEY explains

AFTER breaking your leg in two places the last thing you would want to do is deliver 170 newspapers, but that is exactly what one 16-year-old from Wolverhampton has been doing for the last two months.

Keegan Leary of Brook Close in Coven, has high hopes of becoming a professional footballer and has been playing for PRD United, which is managed by his father Andrew, since the age of seven.

But after a tackle during the last 10 seconds of a crucial cup final game against Shire Oak in December last year, his dreams were shattered.

The Codsall Football Academy student was rushed to hospital where his worst fears were confirmed, he had broken his fibula, tibia and shattered his shin.

Doctors said it would be a year before he would be able to play again and told him to forget about delivering the Wolverhampton Chronicle each week, something which he has been doing since the age of 13.

Heartbreaking

Keegan says: "I was devastated. I knew my injuries were serious because I was in a lot of pain. I had to have an operation where plates were put in my ankle and I had screws inserted where my joint was. It was a nasty break.

"Doctors told me I would be out of football for a long time which was heartbreaking to hear because I had been playing really well up until then.

"To add insult to injury, I wasn't able to deliver the Wolverhampton Chronicle on my paper round which I have been doing for almost four years. I always make sure I deliver the paper whether it is raining, snowing or sunny outside, so I was really fed up."

After a few of months indoors on crutches, Keegan decided it was time to get back outside delivering the newspaper.

He started off by delivering to a few houses at first with the help of his parents, but as his leg began to heal, he was able to deliver to up to three streets at a time.

He says: "My mum and dad had been delivering the paper for me while I was recovering but I was glad to start doing it again. A lot of the people I deliver to had been asking where I was and one lady even gave me a card.

"Delivering the Chronicle really cheered me up. It took my mind off football and gave me something to do that I enjoyed. I always read the paper, particularly the sport section to keep up to date with what is going on in football and I really enjoy going on my rounds because it brings in a bit of money which is important for young people my age.

"I think my parents were worried that I was doing too much too soon and were concerned about how heavy the bag was going to be, but I knew I could do it."

Surprised

Keegan's mother Alison says: "I think Keegan's dad and I were more frightened about the break than he was. We were a bit reluctant about him doing his paper round in case the bag was too heavy for him but he was adamant that it was something he wanted to do.

"He has been delivering the Chronicle since he was 13. It's great because it brings in money for him"

Keegan, whose father Andrew also works in the Chronicle's distribution department, has since started physiotherapy and is hoping to be back on the pitch when footballing season begins again in September.

He says: "I was given the all clear and told everything was looking good last month. I have since started physio which is helping me a lot.

"I think I have surprised doctors at how fast I have recovered. It is probably my eagerness to get back out there and back to normal which has helped. I have recently started football training again.

"My parents have been great all the way through."

Keegan enjoys his normal weekly newspaper round

Talented – Keegan with some of his footballing trophies

So grateful – Keegan with his mum and dad, Alison and Andrew

THROUGH THE YEARS

1983...

THE West Midlands was at the centre of the General Election battle after Labour deputy leader Denis Healey accused the Prime Minister of wrecking the region.At a crowded meeting at West Bromwich town hall, Mr Healey said Mrs Thatcher had given the area the lowest standard of living in the country.

A 13TH century house in Wombourne was turned into a country pub for the television cameras. The Wodehouse was used by Central Television as a backdrop for the comedy series The Other 'Arf.

A BILSTON man slammed Wolverhampton council's promise to collect garden waste for pensioners as "a load of rubbish." Joseph Perrins said he had waited three months for the refuse depot to remove eight bags of leaves from his garden.

1993...

A MAJOR campaign was launched to save free travel passes for nearly half a million pensioners in the region. West Midlands PTA and the Pensioners' Convention joined forces in an attempt to persuade the government to change the way it funded public transport.

UNEMPLOYMENT figures in Wolverhampton soared past the 20,000 mark, confirming its reputation as the jobs blackspot of the West Midlands. Council chiefs blamed the figures on a sharp decline in the region's manufacturing sector.

A PERTON pensioner was reunited with his sister – 53 years after his family was split up by the Russian invasion of Poland. Jan Bobrownicki was delighted to meet his sister Irena, having been told his family were all dead after he arrived in Britain in 1947.

2003...

A WOLVERHAMPTON mechanic swopped his spanner for hot water and towels when his partner gave birth in his living room. Greg Owen followed phone inst-ructions from a midwife as he helped to deliver his 9lb 3oz daughter Katie Anne.

A WOLVERHAMPTON City Council payroll clerk put her calculator away – after almost 50 years with the authority. Joyce Durkin retired as the council's longest-serving member of staff having joined the payroll department in 1953.

THE DRINK that first whetted Brits' appetites for lager faced a sharp exit after brewery bosses announced it was winding down production. Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries, which brewed and distributed Harp, announced the tipple would only be available in a limited number of pubs.

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LETTERS

Letters waste NHS cash

ON May 1 a friend of ours received two letters from Russells Hall Hospital.

Both were dated April 29 and identical.

Each one apologised for having to cancel his appointment on April 17 and gave a new appointment date for June.

He had attended this clinic on the 17th as originally arranged without any problem.

Even if it had to be changed it was a little late in the day to inform him.

He always has to wait for an appointment to come by post following his visits as do my husband and I.

Surely it would be more cost effective to make a yearly appointment at the time of attending and only write if it has to be changed (in plenty of time of course).

I know some will probably forget, but it can only be a benefit to those who do attend and have all been booked at the same time.

With the high cost of postage these days it does not take long to build up a huge bill for genuine letters, but if mistakes like this are made on a regular basis, (and they are it seems) it is just a complete waste of NHS funds.

JENNY JAMES
Dock Road
Wordsley

Vile man should be charged on deaths

JAMES McCormick has been jailed for 10 years for selling useless golf ball detectors as bomb detectors.

These detectors were not fit for purpose, and this vile man knew it.

Lots of people must have died because of this man lining his pockets, knowing they were not what he said they were.

Being charged with fraud is not enough, 10 years is not enough. This man should also be charged with manslaughter. These so called bomb detectors gave a false sense of security to those using them in Iraq.

The money he has stashed away should be taken away and given to all those people who have suffered because of explosions from bombs, that were not detected, because of this man's greed. He knew what he was doing, has he no shame?

EILEEN TRACEY
Booth Close
Kingswinford

Frustration at process of applying for a badge

IN Oct 2112 I was diagnosed with cancer and commenced chemotherapy.

I was left with the severe side effect of neuropathy – stiff, painful and numb feet and pins and needles in my hands.

Because of the severity of the neuropathy I am unable to drive.

In February 2013 I was persuaded to apply for a blue badge. Two months later I received a phone call to say my application could not be processed until eight weeks had passed following my operation, which takes me to the end of May. What relevance is there in this? I have recovered from the operation two weeks ago and all I want is to regain my mobility. I have now had cancer for seven months with severe side effects and can't get a blue badge. How many others have been treated like this?

MRS JOYCE BERRY
Dudley

LETTERS to the Editor

POST
Stourbridge Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES

E-MAIL
Stourbridge.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Every victim should be treated equally

CAN some apologist please explain to me why so much special emphasis has been placed on Stephen Lawrence ever since his murder 20 years ago?

He is only one of thousands of victims of racially motivated murder and violence (many of them white), most of whom don't have a plaque marking where they were attacked and most of whom haven't had a memorial service attended by sycophantic politicians and others.

All those who keep going on about Stephen Lawrence need to be reminded of just three examples of the numerous other murders that have taken place. Such as the murder of a young soldier in Birmingham by a gang of black youths; the murder of a white youth in Cambridgeshire by a gang of Asians and, of course, the hacking to death of PC Blakelock on Broadwater Farm estate in London.

Any violent attack, whatever the outcome and whatever the colour or creed of the victim, is worthy of equal coverage and equal condemnation because all of the victims are equally important to their friends, their family and to a caring society.

R A SARGEANT
Corporation Road, Dudley

God's angels on hospital wards

I FEEL I must tell of my experience on the Georgina unit C-4 Ward 2 at Russell's Hall Hospital. The nurses and staff are second to none. In my three week stay I never saw one frown or long face. Nothing was too much trouble. There are two words that come to mind – God's angels.

Thanks again C-Ward for making my recovery pleasant and happy.

JOHN HINGLEY
Dudley

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MEMORY LANE

Prisoners of war returning to RAF Cosford at the end of the Second World War

In the mid-1960s RAF Cosford had its own farm to supply food

Days of camouflaged Cosford

Bernard Smith, left, during his service day when he was stationed at RAF Cosford and today aged 87

THE grass at RAF Cosford was painted to look like a hedgerow.

Cows were brought in to wander its satellite landing grounds.

So meticulous were the efforts to disguise the valuable planes in its care, that airmen would even string washing lines from the hangars.

"If there were Spitfires or Mosquito bombers out in the field, they would dig big holes around them and drop trees in," says Squadron Leader Graham Lee. "The idea was to make it look like a farm."

It certainly worked. Throughout the war, RAF Cosford was only bombed once, and it appears that was probably by accident.

Cosford, which was hastily put up amid growing tensions with Nazi Germany in the run-up to the Second World War, celebrates its 75th anniversary in July.

The milestone, along with that of the Supermarine Spitfire, with which the station has a close association, will be recognised at Cosford Air Show on June 9.

The need for a new RAF base close to the industrial heartlands of the West Midlands was identified

by Mark Andrews

by the mid-1930s, following Hitler's rise to power and the breakdown of disarmament talks between France and Germany.

Cosford was one of several sites chosen. It was also decided the site would make an ideal location for an RAF technical training school.

Major building work, which included the construction of 38 hangars, began in February, 1938, and somehow it was officially declared open within five months.

Gloves

But, demonstrating the make-do-and-mend philosophy of the time, the camp was far from finished when it opened to the new trainees.

"In winter 1938 and 39, many of the new recruits would be sat at their desks with their coats and gloves on, because there wasn't any glass in the windows, or they hadn't yet put the doors on," says Graham.

No. 9 Maintenance Unit, which stored and serviced aircraft, as well as supplying them to squadrons serving in the front line, opened the following year. Spare parts for Spitfires were also produced. The base became so busy two overspill landing grounds were opened at nearby Brocton and Weston Park. In 1942 the unit started producing gliders.

By this time, there were 9,000 staff and trainees at Cosford, most of them living in tents. A major RAF hospital was added in 1940. From April, 1945 it serves as a repatriation and rehabilitation centre for returning RAF prisoners of war.

Bernard Smith, now 87, was a corporal there during the closing stages of the war. "We were housed in wooden huts dispersed outside the main camp perimeter," he says.

He returned as an engineering instructor in 1946 to find the huts were more permanent.

"During the big freeze of 1947, the corporal's club that I belonged to held a party, but the beer was frozen in the bottle."

He also recalls the airmen going around opening doors during the freeze, so the toilets would freeze and the men would be sent home.

"I always remember it as a happy camp," says Mr Smith, who now lives in Leicestershire.

● Competition – Page 10

Aerial view of RAF Cosford at the start of the Second World War with the airfield camouflaged by painting on fake hedges

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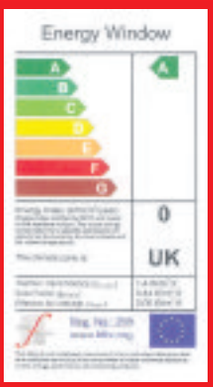

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COMPETITION

Anniversary air show is all set for take-off

RAF Cosford's 75th Anniversary Air Show will soon be ready for take-off and the Chronicle series is offering the chance to win free tickets to the show.

Eleven lucky readers could win a pair of tickets to the show which is being held on Sunday, June 9.

The RAF Cosford Air Show will return with an extravaganza of entertainment for all the family.

Alongside the thrilling flying action, visitors will be treated to non-stop entertainment on the ground. With so many new things to see and do at the 2013 Air Show, the experience will be breathtaking.

Interactive

Aircraft confirmations include a number of historic aircraft including the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, the last airworthy B-17 Flying Fortress in Europe and Avro Vulcan XH558 from the Vulcan to the Sky Trust, as well as the famous RAF Red Arrows.

Enjoy expanded interactive aircraft and military displays, arena demonstrations, visit the fair ground, shop for craft and memorabilia or visit the RAF museum where entry is included.

Spitfire is always a favourite

Watch the thrilling Red Arrows team with their usual daring displays

In 2013 the show will celebrate three important Anniversaries: The 75th Anniversary of Royal Air Force Cosford, the 75th Anniversary of the Spitfire entering RAF service and 40 years of RAF service from the Jaguar jet aircraft.

Supporting our troops

All profits from the RAF Cosford Air Show are donated to local and service charities in support of military personnel and their families.

Ticket information

Tickets are £20 in advance, £25 on the day (cash only) and free for children under 16 when they are accompanied by an adult. Car parking is free.

Tickets can be purchased at www.cosfordairshow.co.uk, by calling the credit/debit card 24-hour ticket line: 0871 230 1083 (calls are 10p per min plus network charges).

COSFORD AIR SHOW 2013

HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer this question:

Question: Which World famous RAF aerobatic display team are appearing at this year's show?

Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and contact number to Cosford Competition, Chronicle series (editorial), 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES. Closing date: May 23.

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NEWS

MP joining residents in call for return of police

AN MP has joined residents calling for officers to return full – time to a village police station amid fears over crime.

Officers have not been based full-time at Kinver Police Station for more than 12 months – instead journeying from up to 20 miles away to attend emergencies.

Recently residents were joined by South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson to demand talks with police chiefs on the issue.

Kinver has been hit in recent months by a spate of attacks on convenience stores, alongside crimes like thefts and anti-social behaviour.

Pcso Paula Wilkes does have a permanent base within Kinver Library and the force said regular meetings are held in the village for people to raise their concerns.

Insp Donna Gibbs, who looks after Kinver and surrounding areas, said the police station was "no longer fit for purpose".

But Mr Williamson said: "To have no permanent police presence in Kinver is disgraceful.

"This is an area of great concern but we do have low crime levels in Kinver and police do excellent work. However I do feel Kinver can become a black hole without any physical police presence."

Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator Bob Clarke of Jenks Avenue, Kinver, said police 'have not spoken to any of the neighbourhood watch co-ordinators about any of the changes.' There was a police and community meeting held in Kinver at the Country Cafe in Sandy Lane, last week.

HSBC profits nearly double

Profits at HSBC have almost doubled amid improvements in the bank's key trading markets. In the three months to the end of March, the bank achieved pre-tax profit of £5.4 billion up 95 per cent on the same period last year.The impressive improvement came on the back of a restructure in the group, which saw £643 million of costs removed, and revenue increase by 14 per cent to £11.8bn.

Station rails in award

Landlord Mike Antoszkiewicz and his wife Zena, at Codsall Station

A MIDLANDS pub has won a top award from real ale enthusiasts.

Codsall Station has been named Country Pub of the Year by the Wolverhampton branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra).

Judges singled the pub out for praise for the quality of its beer and its atmosphere. They also praised the staff's level of service and said it was an important part of the local community.

The pub held the award between 2000 and 2007 and landlord, Mike Antoszkiewicz, said he was pleased to win it back.

He added: "I am proud and delighted to receive this accolade. There is no secret formula. It is purely through the hard work and support of my family who all muck in as part of a team.

"I am also in the lucky position of serving beers which are delivered to me in a consistently high quality condition so that makes the job easier," he said.

The pub is next door to the tracks at Codsall railway station and was created out of the refurbished station building and waiting rooms.

It has become known in the local area for its annual beer festival, featuring more than 30 ales and ciders. Last month the Hog's Head in Stafford Street was named the best pub in Wolverhampton city centre by Camra.

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Queen sends invites to firms to mark 60 years

THE Queen will honour leading firms in the West Midlands with a celebration at Buckingham Palace to mark the 60th anniversary of the Coronation.

The Coronation Festival takes place between July 11 and 14 and will showcase the greatest in innovation, excellence and industry over the last six decades.

Firms in the region that hold Royal Warrants – a mark of recognition for companies manufacturing goods for the Royal family – are among 200 that have been invited to attend the event alongside international dignitaries.

Among those attending the celebrations in the palace gardens are mat manufacturers Phs Treadsmart, Smethwick; horse grooming brush makers Vale Brothers, of Long Street, Walsall and fine carpet manufacturers Brintons of Stourport Road, Kidderminster. Jaguar Land Rover, which is building a £500 million engine factory at Wolverhampton, is also exhibiting along with WWRD from Barlaston, Staffordshire, which takes in Waterford, Wedgewood and Royal Doulton.

Peter Wilkes, managing director of Vale Brothers, said: "We have held a Royal Warrant for many years and it is a great honour."

His company, which has been going since 1776, employs 34 in Walsall.

The public is invited to attend the Coronation Festival on July 13 and 14. Tickets are priced at £30 per person through the website www.coronationfes tival.com

£18m village started

THE first stage of work on a new £18 million retirement village in Dudley is under way.

A contractor has now been appointed to building the 120-bed development on the site of the former Cradley High School, Homer Hill.

Preparation work including installing fencing to allow the nearby parkland to be used throughout the construction has started.

Loughborough contractor and developer William Davis Ltd has secured the contract to build the complex, which is aimed at over-55s.

Planning permission for the scheme was granted two months ago, despite opposition from residents living near the site, off Slade Road, on grounds it was unsuitable for the development and it would cause disruption.

The designs for the complex were scaled back after concerns that it would tower over neighbouring properties were raised.

Independent

Director of assets at Midland Heart Carl Larter said: "Appointing William Davis ensures we are another step closer to providing independent accommodation and an inspiring lifestyle to transform the lives of local older people.

"This will be Midland Heart's third extra care scheme in the borough with a further two planned to follow in accordance with Dudley Council's extra care housing strategy."

William Davis' managing director Guy Higgins added: "Over the coming months we look forward to witnessing the transformation of this site and, through close collaboration with our partners, local residents, schools and community groups, we hope to provide an exceptional facility that will become a benchmark for future extra care developments within the region."

It will be the third Midland Heart extra care centre in the Dudley area, after schemes in Coseley and Russells Hall estate, Dudley.

Courses to help young

DUDLEY College has launched a new programme to help young people get ready for work.

It is designed for anyone who left school last year and aims to provide them with experience that employers are looking for.

The short courses, running over the summer, will be in engineering and administration.

A training allowance of £30 a week will be available for those attending.

Anyone interested should contact Dudley College on 01384 363 274, or visit www.dudleycol.ac.uk/GetJob Ready.

Pair of big cats star in zoo's photo exhibition

Photographer Talvinder Chohan at the launch of the tiger exhibition at Dudley Zoo

AN exhibition of photographs offering a snapshot of the past year for two female tigers at Dudley Zoo has been launched.

The Year of The Tigers is on display on an outdoor gallery, which spans the upper and lower levels of the Tecton big cat enclosure.

It showcases images taken by photographer Talvinder Chohan of the big cats Tschuna and Daseep.

The zoo's head of media and communications, Jill Hitchman, said: "Talvinder has been working on a tiger conservation project with our media team since December and his photographs so capture the spirit of our two female tigers that we wanted to share his work with our visitors."

Talvinder, a biologist, from Birmingham, said: "I have always wanted to have my own exhibition.

"I can't believe that dream has come true and especially for it to be on tigers, it's just perfect. I can't thank Dudley Zoo enough."

Seminar aiming to help business

STOURBRIDGE MP Margot James is hosting a breakfast seminar to offer advice to local businesses.

The event will take place tomorrow (Friday) and there will be various speakers involved in offering support to UK exporters.

The free seminar, which is being held to mark Export Week, will begin at 8.45am, with presentations running from 9.15am until 11am.

There will also be a question and answer session. Ms James said: "I am delighted to be hosting this seminar with NatWest to mark Export Week."

The event takes place at the Ruskin Glass Centre, Wollaston Road, Amblecote and businesses can sign up to attend by sending an email to margot.james.mp@parliament.uk

Jobs boost as firm is on move

A SPECIALIST seating company with a bulging order book plans to move to a much larger factory – and provide a jobs boost.

Repose Specialist Seating Solutions, with its 30 employees, is outgrowing its factory at Brick Kiln Street, Brierley Hill.

It is on the move to a new, 23,500 sq ft factory in Cokeland Place, Cradley Heath. And the company, which has seen a 20 per cent growth in annual turnover over the last three years, intends to take on another seven to 10 people in its upholstery, wood mill and labour departments as it continues to grow.

Repose, which specialises in making chairs for the increasing number of people living with disabling back and neck disorders, is aiming for a 25 per cent growth this year – and to boost turnover from £2.7 million to £5m by 2016.

Residents urge action on drivers who speed

A CAMPAIGN has been launched for tough measures to slow drivers along Hagley Road near Hasbury C of E School in Halesowen.

Parents and residents have raised a 200-name petition calling on Dudley Council to look at the problem and urging them to install a zebra crossing.

They are also calling for a 20mph limit.

Councillor Donella Russell, ward member for Belle Vale, said residents in the area had been concerned about the situation for some time.

"Hagley Road is very dangerous and some drivers do not slow down when the crossing patrol is trying to get the children safely over the road," she said.

Danger dummy alert to parents

TRADING standards officers are cracking down on brightly-coloured babies' dummies which could be dangerous to young children.

by Adam Thompson

Warnings have been issued by Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley councils.

Officers at the three authorities were alerted to a growing trend of people buying dummies which have been decorated by people at home and then sold via the internet.

While the original individual pieces may adhere to safety regulations, concerns have been raised about the dummies once they have been decorated and assembled.

Fears include gem stones becoming detached and swallowed by children, the glue or paint applied being potentially toxic, and other hygiene dangers.

Last May, two traders dealing in the dummies had their operations shut down when they were caught by trading standards officers in Scotland.

People who modify dummies have to ensure they are safe before they are sold. Some designer dummies can fetch prices of up to £25. They increased in popularity after Beyoncé and Jay-Z's daughter Blue Ivy reportedly received a diamond-studded dummy as a birthday gift.

Officers in Wolverhampton are visiting children's centres to highlight dangers the dummies could pose.

Councillor John Reynolds, the city council's cabinet member for city services, said: "While selling custom-made dummy chains is not illegal, we want people to make ensure they are safe before they do so."

Councillor Ian Jones, Sandwell Council cabinet member for neighbourhood services, said: "We are aware that there is a growing trend among parents to customise their children's dummies.

Regulations

Parents should be extremely careful when customising dummies for children."

Councillor David Stanley, cabinet member responsible for trading standards in Dudley, said: "The dummies being purchased in bulk in the first place meet all safety regulations but they are then being decorated at home with hand-glued gems, beads and magnets, which is where the concern lies."

High praise from Plant

Rock legend Robert Plant introduces event organiser and music student Jordan Statham, 20, on stage at the concert which showcased up-and-coming musicians

MUSIC lovers at a college arts festival were treated to a surprise appearance by a very special guest when rock legend Robert Plant walked on stage.

The former Led Zeppelin frontman was at a concert for autistic performers organised by music student Jordan Statham.

The talented 20-year-old, who attends Glasshouse College, in Amblecote, Stourbridge, and Kidderminster College, was treated to a private pep talk from the musician, lasting well over an hour

Later the superstar introduced Jordan on stage to a packed auditorium of 240 people and praised him as a very special guitarist.

The West Bromwich-born blues man, who is briefly back in the Midlands during a break in his current world tour, heard about Jordan by friend and Kidderminster College lecturer Kevyn Gammond, who played with Plant in the original Band of Joy.

"I was told about Jordan's ambition and his unique achievement in producing a music showcase like this. I think it is great that he is able to let go and express himself in public."

He said it was something every performer, starting out, had to face.

"I was the same person as Jordan is now, sadly too many years ago. I've tried to advise him as he goes out into the circus that is the world."

Showcase

Plant is a patron of MAS Records, the record label based at Kidderminster College which aims to help talented up-and-coming musicians.

Jordan, of High Street, Stourbridge, staged Saturday's gig to showcase the talents of people with learning disabilities.

He said: "I want people to see that having a disability doesn't stop you from achieving your hopes and dreams."

Of Plant, he said: "He was full of enthusiasm, really motivating."

Campaign aims to tackle cruel bogus callers

THE average age of victims of bogus callers is 81, it was revealed, as people in the Black Country were urged to help prevent elderly neighbours and relatives being targeted.

Walsall Trading Standards officers have issued an appeal for young people to look after elderly loved ones.

It comes after a spate of incidents in which rogue callers posed as water, gas or council officials to trick their way into homes.

A campaign has been set up by trading standards and Walsall police to tackle the problem. Councillor Zahid Ali, cabinet member for communities and partnerships, said: "Please remind your loved ones that if anyone knocks on the door they need to check their identification. If in doubt, do not open the door."

A trader register has been set up at www.TraderReg ister.org.uk/Walsall

Tom's efforts recognised by apprentice title

A STUDENT from Halesowen College is apprenticeship champion in recognition of his efforts at a Black Country lift company.

Tom Harris, aged 20, began working at Cradley Heath-based Lift and Engineering Services and is now the apprenticeship champion for the Dudley area.

Tom, of Halesowen, is working in administration, looking after contracts, customer service and inputting customer information. He has also studied for his level two qualification in business and administration at college.

Steve Smith, director at Lift and Engineering Services, said: "Tom has become a great member of the team and is doing really well."

Tom said: "I was looking for a job when this opportunity came up and I have learned so much. I now have a range of new skills and experience."

Cannabis factory found after fire

A CANNABIS factory was discovered after an electrical fault caused a fire at a Wolverhampton house.

West Midlands Police seized 30 cannabis plants from the property in Fisher Street in the Merridale area after fire crews tackled a blaze on the second floor of the mid-terraced house.

It is believed the fire was started by an electrical fault. Firefighters were able to prevent the fire from spreading to ny neighbouring houses.

The house was unoccupied at the time and no arrests were made. Police spokesman Mike Hall said: "Cannabis farms need lots of heat and light energy, plus regular watering, so growers often tamper with power supplies.

"Dodgy electrics and water is a potentially lethal combination."

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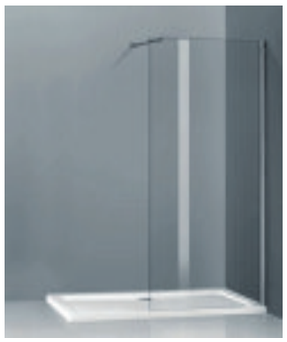

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NEWS

£2.4m price tag put on share of mall business

AN entrepreneur is offering a share of his Midlands mini-malls business in exchange for a multi-million pound investment to expand his empire.

Plaza Malls managing director Tony Swannie wants to add to his sites in Halesowen and Dudley and has set a £2.4m price for a partner to join him.

He says the cash would be used to open more malls, with Wolverhampton and Kidderminster among places shortlisted. The investment offer is listed as 'a commercial property for sale', but Mr Swannie insists he does not want to sell up.

In 2008, the firm opened its first mini mall in Halesowen's High Street. Three years later, the firm spent £1m converting Dudley's former Woolworths into another mall. Together, they are home to more than 60 different small businesses. Mr Swannie said: "We are not selling the malls – we are looking for investment so we can open more in the area."

He said while no sites had been earmarked in other towns and cities, each mini mall would cost about £600,000.

The company was forced to look for investment because the banks would not lend the cash needed, Mr Swannie claims. He values his business at £6m.

He said: "The malls are a great success. They bring all the local businesses together to deliver customers with what they want at an affordable price.

"We are in a niche and it is working well, that's why we are looking to expand further."

Stores looking for cause

TWO supermarkets in Stourbridge and Dudley are looking for new charities to support – and want customers to help choose one. Sainsbury's in Amblecote and Merry Hill are asking shoppers for suggestions for their next Local Charity Partner initiative. Pick up a nomination form at a store or visit www.sainsburys.co.uk/localcharity

Josh's king of the castle

King – Joshua Parker, aged 10, with Langan Turner from Dudley Castle

A DREAM came true for 10-year-old Joshua Parker when he was crowned king for a day at Dudley Zoo and Castle.

A coronation ceremony took place in the 11th century castle courtyard as the youngster from Dudley Road, Sedgley, was given a royal welcome.

After being presented with his crown, he took part in a bird of prey display and tried his hand at falconry. His regal visit was organised as a treat for the schoolboy after he spent time in hospital recovering from an appendix operation.

It was organised by Steve Ford of the Wishing Well programme based at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital.

Joshua, a pupil at Straits Primary School, said he enjoyed his VIP day.

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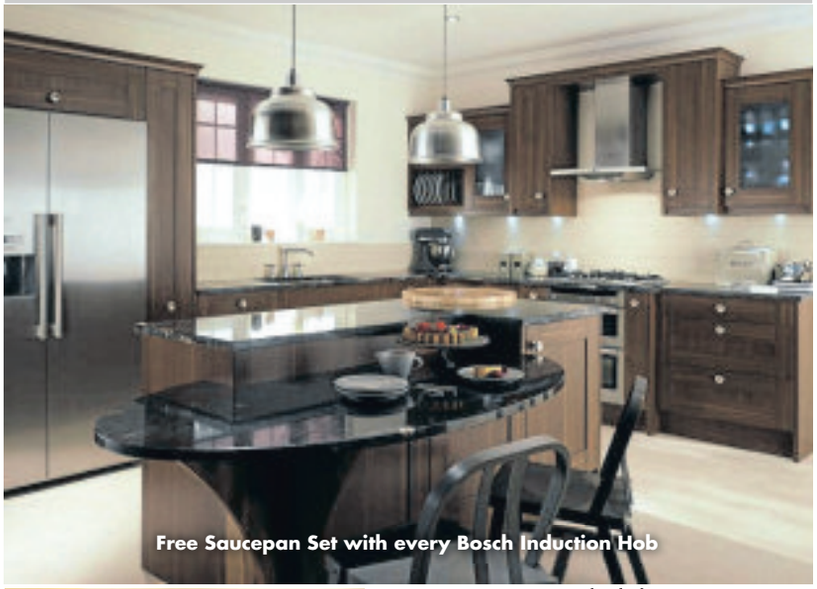

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NEWS

Council cabinet reshuffle after leader challenged

DUDLEY Council leader David Sparks has survived a challenge to his position, prompting a major reshuffle of the authority's decision-making cabinet.

Councillor Shaukat Ali, who had been deputy leader, stood for the leadership of the council's ruling Labour group at the party's annual meeting.

But his challenge was defeated after members elected to keep Councillor Sparks in the top job.

Councillor Ali was also voted out of his role as deputy leader, with Councillor Pete Lowe announced as his replacement.

Following the meeting, Councillor Sparks said a reshuffle of the cabinet had now been confirmed – with changes in some key positions.

As well as serving as deputy leader, Councillor Lowe retains his finance brief on the authority.

Learning

Councillor Judy Foster will now take on regeneration, the portfolio previously held by Councillor Ali, and Steve Waltho is cabinet member for housing and community safety.

Councillor Stuart Turner has been given the portfolio for health and well-being, and Councillor Tim Crumpton will oversee children, libraries and lifelong learning.

Councillor Gaye Partridge will be the lead member for human resources, legal and property.

Councillor Kurshid Ahmed has been given the transport brief and Councillor Dave Branwood will look after adult and community services.

Councillor Tracy Wood retains her environment portfolio in the new-look cabinet. Councillor Sparks refused to comment on the reasons behind Councillor Ali challenging him.

Mya steps up the cash

Mya Gordon, aged 10, who raised more than £300 for the British Red Cross

A BRAVE Dudley girl beat has raised hundreds of pounds for charity at a dance extravaganza.

Mya Gordon, aged 10, not only did a solo dance at the Red Cross event while competing against eight groups, but also opened the show with her performance.

The Corngreaves Primary School pupil, from Netherton, decided to enter the annual British Red Cross Dance: Make Your Move event in Shropshire to build her confidence after having to move schools due to bullying. So she choreographed a solo piece, in which she depicted the effects of war on different people including a soldier, schoolgirl, refugee and nurse, dancing to the song War by Edwin Starr.

And although she didn't win the competition, in which she was up against eight other groups formed of 117 children from around the Midlands, she did raise £310.50 for the charity. Mother Hayley Edwards said: "I'm very very proud of her. She said she didn't care about winning the event, just raising the money for the charity."

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SUSIE fun loving mum with GSOH seeks gentle considerate to get to know better. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404627**

ANNA 38yr old friendly female seeking similar considerate male to enjoy nice quiet loving times together with good humour and affection. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404561**

GILL green eyes, fair hair, medium built, shy, many interests, loves animals, countryside, walking, WLTM male for companionship maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404549**

APRIL, lovely 21yrs old curvy girl seeks mature male to nurture me in every way, looks unimportant, must be experienced. **Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box No: 403931**

WIDOW young hearted 70's, N/S, likes reading, concerts, gardening, meals out, WLTM younger gentleman with similar interests. Stafford area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404177**

SHARON medium built lovely, 33yrs, pale complexion, nice eyes, feminine, outgoing, confident, enjoys varied interests, WLTM all round nice guy for adult relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403345**

CAROL South African lonely heart 37yrs, looking for fun with mature gent 50plus, likes dining in/out, discretion assured/appreciated. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403337**

WIDOW seeking similar aged male to share holidays and weekends out. Car owner preferred. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 389795**

JANE 48yrs West Midlands, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, looking for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403949**

48YR old attractive female seeking local fun maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403947**

WOMAN 55yrs old, N/S, size 14, likes animals, nature, reading, tv, quiet life, seeks man 45-55, N/S for friendship, maybe more. Staffordshire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404447**

HI I am Lorna 39yr old slim female, 5ft 5ins, many interests, loves music, seeking romantic male to enjoy special times together, hopefully leading to true love. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404353**

LOVING caring young 67yr old female, 5ft 2ins, slim size 12, brown hair, likes meals out, GSOH, smoker, seeks slim, smart male with GSOH, 58-62. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 364651**

IVY 45yrs young, attractive, tall, slim but very voluptuous looking for guaranteed fun times with 70yrs plus male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404349**

DISCREET kind man sought by married lady, must be discreet and reliable as am I. **Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 355785**

32YR old slim, dark haired, adventurous, creative, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 352753**

SENSUAL cuddly 32yr old professional looking for similar minded discreet male up to 40yrs for 1-2-1 fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404023**

ELIZABETH 33, curvy attractive blonde, likes walking, socialising, meals out, entertaining, WLTM well educated nice male 50-60's for nice times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403937**

HI I'm Jayne very pretty brunette, stylish, fun, loves the 60's, fine wine/restaurants, seeks professional gent for mutual life enhancement. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403749**

LISA 38yrs, tall slim attractive, broadminded, easygoing, loves cooking, homemaking, nice wine looking for very discreet solvent male 50-90yrs to pamper me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403733**

JANE attractive, seeking male for fun and friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403807**

KEELEY 18yr old slim broadminded blonde, blue eyes, enjoys most things in life, WLTM older guy for fun meets. Discretion assured. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403581**

JULIE gorgeous 40, loves the outdoors, theatre, WLTM energetic open-minded fun male up to 60yrs who like me is very loving and tactile. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403571**

TINA fun loving single mum who enjoys most things in life, seeking happy guy with GSOH for meals in, dates out, possible romance and adult companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403567**

FUN loving lady, outgoing, honest, caring, likes socialising, seeks older male, 50-70. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 383325**

CARING lady, 52, brown hair/eyes, seeks male, 30-60 for socialising, meals out, cinema, music, sports and having a laugh. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392883**

BLONDE tanned female, trendy, 46, GSOH, likes walks, pubs, nights in, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 384852**

43YR old female, bubbly, down to earth, trustworthy, honest, caring, seeks male, 45 plus. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 402945**

APRIL big bubbly 21yr old female who enjoys nights in/out, music, WLTM caring, loving older male, 30-45yrs. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 402789**

LONG haired blonde, 37, enjoys meals out but would love to cook a romantic meal for the man of her dreams. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 361076**

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KIND romantic female, 50, seeking a male to talk, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 368429**

TALL curvy female, 36dd, loves music, looking for fun and romance with dark male. Give me a call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 359238**

61YR old lady 5ft 2ins, medium build, long dark hair, smoker, seeks smart gent who wants to get out and about for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396409**

BIG is beautiful! Female looking for someone to share a life time of happiness with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 368528**

SLIM fit, bubbly female can't wait to meet a tall, slim, fit, mature male who thinks he can keep up. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 367066**

ATTRACTIVE lady, GSOH, slim, dark hair, 50's, likes walks, films, art, meals out, seeks male with GSOH and similar interests for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399245**

CARLA 41, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 2ins, loving, seeking male who likes walks, cinema and romantic meals. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396127**

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JOE 45 attractive medical professional, GSOH, looking for the 50 shades experience with likeminded lady for fun and games. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404639**

BROADMINDED 42yr old male, GSOH, caring, loving good personality seeks female for fun friendship, relationship and adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404623**

CARING male looking for LTR with lady 50's-60's, 17stone plus. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404585**

CARL 40, likes DVDs, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393766**

TONY semi-retired teacher with lots of interests including sport, theatre, walking, OHAC, WLTM professional female to share interests. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404637**

SINGLE male 59, no ties, honest, loyal, serene nature, seeks mature female with the view to becoming lifetime soul mates. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404527**

GARY 39 seeks female 30-50 for fun, maybe relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404487**

ASIAN male 6, 5ft 8ins, slim-medium build, caring, kind, GSOH, WLTM single female 35-45 for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404453**

ROUGH diamond 45 looking for older lady, the older the better, for fun times, can accommodate, let me entertain you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404437**

MALE 73yrs fit, N/S, OHAC, WLTM slim lady of similar age for days out, holidays and walking. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403895**

ANDY 46, looking for female, 40 plus for fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403869**

MIKE 43yrs, 5ft 10ins, short brown hair, blue eyes, loving, caring personality, very genuine, WLTM lady 20-40yrs for LTR. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403901**

MIKE 45, bored, seeks female, any age for adult fun and good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403461**

JOHN 59, 5ft 8ins, OHAC, GSOH, seeks lady, 46-55, likes meals out and in. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403273**

SINGLE male, 60, WLTM local lady with strong physical needs for regular contact with no commitment initially. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 377459**

VINCE 52, caring, seeking female for fun and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401683**

TALL dark, good looking male, 53, seeks attractive female for daytime fun and exciting times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393380**

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45YR old British Asian male, 5ft 9ins, slim-medium build, kind, caring, GSOH, likes romantic meals, nights in, films, music, walks, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403631**

TALL blue eyed 49yr old gent, N/S looking for soul mate, slim lady with no ties and plenty of love to give and receive, is that you? **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404121**

KIND caring gent 41. 5ft 11ins, fit build, WLTM similar lady for friendship, maybe more, likes music, the outdoors and eating out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404055**

COVENTRY male, single, 6ft 1ins, 42, caring, GSOH, loves animals, Tai Chi, seeks female, 20-55, single mums ok, any nationality for nice times in/out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 384677**

5FT 7ins male, looking for lady, 30-40 in Leamington Spa/Warwickshire area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403731**

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www.localgaydate.co.uk

MALE 34, attractive, 5ft 10ins, blue eyes, blond hair, seeks slim male for fun relationship. Any area, can travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 311892**

LESBIAN lady early 50's animal lover, smoker, own vehicle, likes caravanning, seeks local lady 43-55 for friendship, possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404669**

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NEWS

Hospice revamp likely to go ahead

IMPROVEMENTS at a Stourbridge hospice are to go ahead as planned despite funding falling short.

Bosses at Mary Stevens Hospice feared they would have to scale down a revamp after receiving less cash than they were hoping for from a Government pot.

But after considering ways money could be saved, they now say they are optimistic that the work can continue.

The charity, in Hagley Road, wants to build an extension to create a quiet area, and to serve as a base for its community home team. Another part of the development will be to improve the reception area.

Bosses had applied for £750,000 but received £509,127. Chief executive Peter Holiday said a lot of work had taken place to ensure all of the improvements went ahead as planned.

He said savings had been found as the hospice had originally planned to move a unit off-site while the work was being carried out.

But the charity now plans to keep it on-site using pre-fabricated buildings – which will save around £200,000.

It will also be more convenient for staff and hospice users.

"Other hospice resources will also be committed to making up the shortfall if required," he said.

"We will not be completely certain all the work will take place until we have received tenders back from contractors. This should be in around two months."

Campaign aims to tackle park gangs

Chairman of the Friends group, Chris Enwerem, with Councillors Glenis Simms and Derrick Hemingsley

A CAMPAIGN to curb anti-social behaviour at a Wordsley park has been launched by concerned councillors and residents.

by Andrew Turton

There have been complaints about irresponsible pet owners failing to clear away dog mess from King George V Park.

Members of the park's friends' group are also asking for patrols to be stepped up by police after finding evidence of drugs being used by groups of youths.

They want people to take pride in protecting the park for the families and their children who regularly visit the beauty spot.

Dozens of young footballers play on pitches at the park, off Lawnswood Road, including teams from Wordsley Wasps FC.

But the campaigners claim pitches can often have dog mess on them which, they say, can be a health risk for the youngsters.

Important

The park also features a children's playground and other facilities including tennis courts.

However, groups of youths have been congregating in the park and concerned members of the friends' group have found drug paraphernalia recently.

Ward councillors Derrick Hemingsley and Glenis Simms are joining friends group chairman Chris Enwerem to demand action. They intend to raise the matter with police and council enforcement teams.

Councillor Hemingsley said it was important because the park was near Belle Vue Primary School.

"As a local councillor and governor at Belle Vue I feel very strongly about the issues especially dog fouling," he said.

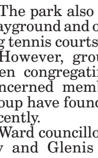
"This can be dangerous and we will be asking for enforcement teams to patrol the park."

Mr Enwerem said: "This park is well used by children and their families and we want it to stay that way."

The friends' group was re-established last year in response to yobs dropping litter and causing a disturbance.

Star of wheelchair football lands a £1,000 scholarship

A WHEELCHAIR football player from Stourbridge has been awarded a £1,000 scholarship from the University of Worcester to compete in the 2013 European Championships.



Chris Gordon

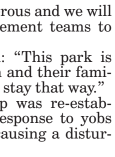
Chris Gordon, captain of Sporting Club Albion – West Bromwich Albion's wheelchair football team – is part of the England wheelchair football national team and will take part in the 2013 European Championships in Paris next month.

The 22-year-old said: "I am very honoured and extremely grateful to have been awarded a university scholarship to help me fulfill my ambition of competing in the Champions' League. The scholarship has allowed me to cover my travel and accommodation costs, as well as make necessary improvements to my playing chair."

Chris, who is completing his sports business management degree at the University of Worcester, has been practising the sport for six years.

Kristian gym club aims to overcome double setback

THE Halesowen gymnastics club of Olympic medal-winner Kristian Thomas is attempting to bounce back after losing almost £300,000 in funding and a much-needed move to bigger premises across the town.



Kristian Thomas

Earls Gymnastics Club had its planned move to the former Wheel Spin go-karting track in Dudley Road scuppered at the eleventh hour after a breakdown in negotiations with the prospective new landlord.

The collapsed move meant the club also lost a £281,000 grant awarded by British Gymnastics, which had to be used for a relocation of the club by the end of March.

Chairman Jon Caulwell said the club had applied for a new grant from the National Association of Gymnastics, while it also worked on new plans for a move away from its base at Earls High School in the background. He said: "The fund we are going for is smaller than the grant we lost, but if we got it we could move forward with proposals for a new site for the club."

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CLUB NEWS

Insight to life in big properties

THE BLACK COUNTRY SOCIETY

THE Kingswinford branch meeting was held at St Mary's Church Hall on Wednesday, April 17 when Patricia Boyd was the speaker.

She gives many talks but on this occasion her subject was "upstairs Downstairs" giving a fascinating insight into what life was like in large houses and estates years ago. She talked about the downstairs staff butler, cooks, parlour maids, servants, etc who all had their various jobs to do in the running of the properties and making sure everything went smoothly "upstairs".

Patricia showed pictures of clothes worn by the lady and gentleman of the big house, the lavish table settings for big events and how eventually after the wars, things became more difficult to recruit staff.

There was no slide presentation but Patricia made the talk come to life with her superb delivery.

The chairman thanked Patricia for her talk and coffee was served by Keith Jeavons.

Ray Sturdy was to a slide presentation at the May 15 meeting. Tickets, at £6, were also available for the buffet supper to take place at the last meeting of the season on Wednesday, June 19 with entertainment from New Dimensional Experience Choir.

It's only 24 hours to Stourport for water

MYTIME OVER FIFTIES

APRIL'S meeting began with a lively talk by John Billingham.

Members and visitors listened to Mr Billingham blending in both geography and history during his talk about the River Stour. Did we know there are five rivers in the country with this name, with the most famous being the Essex/Suffolk Stour? This river is famous as Constable painted the Haywain crossing the river at Flatford Mill. The meaning of the word is "stream" or "fast flowing /powerful" derived from Germanic origins. Our own River Stour is indeed fast flowing as it falls from more than 700 feet above sea level from its origin in the Clent Hills to 65 feet above sea level at its point of entry into the River Severn south of Stourport also collecting many tributaries on the way. Mr Billingham pointed out that if the sea levels rise as predicted with climate change Stourport could become "Stourport on Sea". The river and its tributaries drain a large area of country or "basin" from Wolverhampton southwards and such is its speed that any water entering the Smestow Brook tributary takes only 24 hours to get to Stourport. The River Stour itself arises in the Clent hills.

Thanks were given to Mr Billingham for such a fascinating talk as the group learned much about the history of this area.

Cake to celebrate fifth club birthday

GENTLE EXERCISE GROUP

THIS May the group enters its fifth year of gentle exercise at the Richardson Hall, Lawnswood Road, Wordsley.

They will celebrate with the usual birthday cake during the social time, following the session, when tea or coffee is always served. Membership has fluctuated over the past year but holds a steady number and another successful year is anticipated. Several outings have been organised and all enjoyed a Christmas lunch at the Mount Pleasant, Kingswinford.

The group took part in Wordsley Community Association's Christmas Bazaar with a cake, fresh vegetable and fruit table and also the open day in June. Several members continue to support the 200 club organised by the association.

A good workout is promised to all. You exercise at your own pace, seated or standing, with a fully trained instructor.

The group is open to all ages and disabled facilities are available. It meets every Friday from 1.30pm to 2.30pm with a social half hour of tea, coffee and biscuits afterwards.

Competing for annual quiz

CLENT GARDENING CLUB

Rob Cole from Meadow Farm Garden and Nursery at Feckenham was April's speaker. A large and enthusiastic audience was enthralled by his talk entitled "Birth of a Dream".

Chairman Pat Orme announced that the plant for the competition at the flower show in September will this year be a fuchsia and these were offered for sale in the form of plug plants for members to grow.

The meeting was concluded with the monthly raffle.

The meeting tomorrow night (Friday) at Belbroughton Church Hall will be the annual quiz between Belbroughton Horticultural Society and Clent Gardening Club, followed by a supper.

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Choir marks milestone with appeal for singers

MEMBERS of Brierley Hill Choral Society have been celebrating 80 years of making music.

While celebrating the past, they have been looking forward – and hoping to appeal to younger singers who will help to guarantee the choir's future.

by Tom Mason

The society began life in 1933 and now has 65 members, but conductor Tim Calloway said the youngest regular member of the choir was about 40 and the average age was 60.

Mr Calloway, who is 60, has led the choir for seven years.

He said: "Young people don't seem particularly interested in choral singing anymore and it's a bit of a worry. It's to do with the education system and the Government would do well to recognise the value of music.

Future

"When I was younger we used to have assemblies regularly where you would be exposed to hymn singing. Some people might have hated it but others might have said 'this is all right'."

Chairman Heather Casson said that when the choir began, members ranged from people in their mid-20s to retirees.

Mrs Casson added: "We would love more young people in the choir. They are the future. While TV programmes such as Last Choir Standing and personalities such as Gareth Malone have re-awakened enthusiasm for choral music, they have also changed the expectations of people – from the perspective of both the performers and the audience.

"Catchy tunes can grab the attention, but the emotion and passion that can be achieved in the classical works is neither to be underestimated nor surpassed."

The choir began life as Brierley Hill Concert Society and their first concert was Hiawatha at Brierley Hill Town Hall.

A name change came in 1972 and the Brierley Hill Choral Society still provides amateur singers with a chance to perform. Mrs Casson said it was open to anyone, regardless of ability.

The choir staged a concert last week at St Michael's Church in Brierley Hill to mark their milestone.

Anyone interested in joining the choir can go to www.brierley-hill-choral-society.org

Conductor Tim Calloway with The Brierley Hill Choral Society in rehearsal for the group's 80th birthday show

Ex-staff of Simon looking for help

FORMER employees of a closed engineering firm have asked for £5,000 of public money to build a monument to commemorate their work.

Almost 400 people worked at the Simon Engineering plant in Queen's Cross, Dudley from 1953 to 1975, and then in Pensnett Road, Holly Hall until it closed in 1995.

The firm is famous for building hydraulic platforms, including the Simon Snorkle, which is still seen on fire engines, rescue vehicles and aeroplane ice removers.

Members of the Simon Engineering Retirement Association now plan to put up a monument outside where the Holly Hall factory once stood, and have asked Dudley Council for funding.

Mayor Melvyn Mottram worked for the firm for 22 years. "Simon Engineering was Dudley, and Dudley was Simon Engineering," he said.

"The operations in the town was like a family, everyone knew everyone – it was a great place."

Fair at church

ST Peter's Church in Kent Street, Upper Gornal will be holding a fair from 10.30am-2.30pm this Saturday. The theme for the fair will be Old Gornal and there will be refreshments, face painting, plants and books on sale.

Talks go on with council over site

DEVELOPERS bidding to build a £120 million business park in Coseley are holding talks with council bosses as they draw up final designs.

A 66-acre site would be transformed with business units, a supermarket and a wholesale warehouse, which could create up to 1,300 jobs.

A community hall and full-sized football pitch would be included in work. Business units would be built for existing and new firms.

Outline planning permission for the scheme, on an area stretching between Birmingham New Road and Sedgley Road West, was granted last summer.

The site's owner Skelton Group Investments is now working on more detailed plans. A spokesman said: "We are working to bring the scheme forward as soon as possible.

"There is a lot of work going on behind the scene and we are in talks with the council."

Visit over noise

THE chief executive of a train firm is to visit a Dudley railway station after residents complained about noise. It comes after Stourbridge's MP Margot James presented a petition signed by more than 170 residents who live by the Stourbridge Junction station to the chief executive of Chiltern Railways Rob Brighouse.

star extra TRAVEL

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For most visitors the highlight will be a full day's game drive that brings the chance to see the sweeping savannah and muddy waterholes lined with animals, and to marvel at the incredible 150 mammal and 500 bird species that live in the Kruger National Park, including the 'big five': elephant, lion, rhino, leopard and buffalo. Rooms are reserved at the three-star superior Hippo Hollow Country Estate, located in the midst of lush forest on the banks of the Sabie River. It's open-air terrace overlooks the grounds and river, so watch out for the hippos!

Those interested in history will be intrigued by the visit to Zululand, passing through Swaziland en route, to reach the haunting battlefields of Islandlwana and Rorke's Drift. In 1879 these two battles, just a day apart, became a defining moment for the British Empire and the specialist Zulu guide will make those desperate encounters come alive.

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One of the first adventures on the itinerary is the famous Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage which boasts a herd of over 75 animals from matriarchs to calves and their daily bath in the river provides a stunning photo opportunity.

Some of the other included tours are to the 600 foot granite tower called Sigiriya, or the Lion Rock, known for its ancient murals of 'cloud maidens'; to Kandy, Sri Lanka's last Royal capital; to the amazing cave temples of Dambulla, a UN World Heritage site; and to a well-known tea estate and spice garden, staying at the four-star Grand Hotel, originally the summer home of one of the Governors of Ceylon.

For a different sort of experience, two nights are reserved at the Safari Hotel, which has a pool, bar and restaurant overlooking the Tiffa Lake. Just 45 minutes from the Yala National Park this is the base for an early morning start to the jeep safari in the hope of seeing leopard, elephants, saltwater crocodiles, wild boar, sloth bears, monitor lizards and a huge variety of birdlife. The three-star superior Palms Hotel in the beach resort of Beruwela is the final port of call, allowing for two days of rest and relaxation before the journey home.

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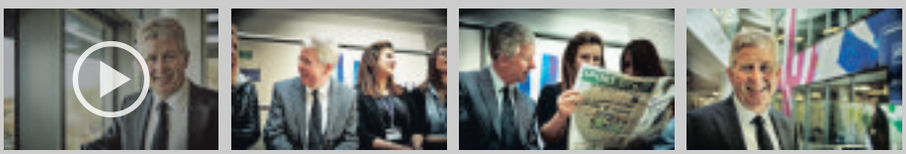

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CHRONICLE

Win a Les Mis DVD

THE musical movie that won standing ovations from cinema audiences – Les Miserables (12) – was released on Blu-Ray and DVD this week. We are offering readers the chance to win a DVD of the acclaimed film based on the hit West End show.

The epic tale of revenge and redemption, set in 19th century France, stars Oscar-winning Anne Hathaway, Hugh Jackman and Russell Crowe. The musical based on the novel by Victor Hugo features such songs as I Dreamed A Dream and, Bring Him Home. The Blu-Ray version features almost an hour of bonus material.

Who wrote the novel Les Miserables? Send your answer on a postcard with name, address and telephone number to DVD competition, Chronicles (editorial), 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES. Closing date May 24. Usual rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

Catch tomorrow's rock stars as a new generation roll in

Back to the 60s musical

THE BIGGEST and brashest feel-good musical of recent years, Hairspray, is back on the road and comes to Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday.

Freya Sutton steps into the spotlight as the unstoppable Tracy Turnblad, promoting dancing, hair products and improved inter-racial relationships in 1960s Baltimore.

Finalist

Waterloo Road actor Mark Benton steps into Michael Ball, John Travolta and Brian Conley's dancing shoes as her mom Edna.

Former EastEnder Lucy Benjamin is vicious Velma Von Tussle and X Factor finalist Marcus Collins plays Seaweed Stubbs. You Can't Stop The Beat until June 1.

Big girl you're beautiful – Freya Sutton as the irrepressible Tracy Turnblad in the new touring version of hit 1960s Baltimore musical Hairspray, coming to the Hippodrome

A RISING new generation of rock acts is coming to the West Midlands.

Bastille, the musical vehicle for the talents of Dan Smith, has sold out an eagerly-awaited gig at the Birmingham O2 Academy on November 3 – not bad for an outfit that only released debut album Bad Blood in March.

The new single will be Laura Palmer, inspired by the murdered girl in 1990 cult TV show Twin Peaks. Bastille fans who are also going to see Muse at Coventry's Ricoh Arena on Wednesday, can catch them as the support act.

Bastille's Dan Smith

Bugg

The O2 Academy is also the venue for young Nottingham singer-songwriter Jake Bugg, who has a stint of three gigs at the Bristol Street venue, on October 28, 29 and November 10.

Raw Liverpudlian rockers The Dirty Rivers play at the Hare and Hounds in Kings Heath on May 25, the same venue as psychedelic hipsters Temples on June 19.

There is a chance to catch rising stars Young Kato when the Cheltenham six-piece, featured on TV's Made In Chelsea, play the O2 Academy 3 on May 27.

On May 28 the next big thing from Manchester, 1975, play the HMV Institute Library in Digbeth.

Laughs upon Avon

MORE than 35 acts feature at the Comedy Hullabaloo festival over the May 23-26 bank holiday weekend in Stratford-upon-Avon. Several venues in the town will be used and tickets start from £9. The acts include Al Murray, Sandi Toksvig, Milton Jones and Ed Byrne. See comedyhullabaloo.com

REVIEW

Yes, Prime Minister, Grand Theatre

WHEN it comes to good entertainment this hilarious foray into the world of political drama and intrigue gets my vote.

The original writers of the classic BBC TV Series, Antony Jay and Jonathan Lynn have reunited for this production with a new satirical take on Whitehall. Following three sell-out West End seasons this successful play has really made a name for itself.

Prime Minister Jim Hacker and his Cabinet Secretary Sir Humphrey Appleby are back, spinning out of control through the collapsing Euro and austerity measures in a world of 24-hour news, Blackberrys and 'sexed-up' dossiers.

Crispin Redman is superb in the role of the evasive and unscrupulous Sir Humphrey. How he remembered all his tongue-twisting dialogue is quite amazing.

He contrasted perfectly with the bumbling Prime Minister (Michael Fenton Stevens) who fails to grasp most of Sir Humphrey's 'advice'. Most of the laughs were provided by Michael Matus who played the naive Principal Private Secretary Bernard Woolley.

An excellent production.

Sue Attwater

Grand Holly day

ROCK 'n' roll veteran Jess Conrad will join the cast for a tribute show to Buddy Holly – A Legend Reborn at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Sunday, June 16. Call 01902 429212.

What's On!

SATURDAY'S TV 18.05.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Bonnie Tyler

Eurovision Song Contest 2013
BBC1, 8pm
Graham Norton returns to the commentator's booth for the 58th Eurovision, which this year takes place in Sweden. Favourite to win is Denmark's Emmelie de Forest. Norway's I Feed You My Love has been described as a cross between Daft Punk and Metallica, while Marco Mengoni is the Italian X Factor champion. The UK is represented by Bonnie Tyler and Believe in Me; although we don't expect her to get nul points, we don't believe she'll turn out to be the winner either – but we'll be thrilled to bits if we're proved wrong.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nigel Slater's Simple Suppers. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **12.15** Football Focus. **1.00** Live MotoGP. **2.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **3.00 Film:** Herbie: Fully Loaded. (2005) Disney comedy sequel, starring Lindsay Lohan and Michael Keaton. **4.35** Escape to the Country. (R) **5.20** Celebrity Mastermind. (R) **5.50** Pointless Celebrities. (R)
6.40 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.
7.00 Doctor Who. Clara is summoned to a special meeting with Madame Vastra, where she hears a message for the Doctor – and it soon becomes clear he is being lured into a trap. Last in the series.
7.45 The National Lottery Draws. John Partridge presents a performance by veteran rockers Status Quo and sets the balls rolling to decide the all-important numbers.
8.00 Eurovision Song Contest 2013. Graham Norton commentates on the musical extravaganza from Malmo, Sweden, as Bonnie Tyler aims to become the first UK winner since 1997 with her country ballad Believe in Me. Red button viewers will be able to access lyrics to all songs and send comments.
11.15 BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update.
11.35 Live at the Apollo. Al Murray hosts the stand-up comedy show from the Hammersmith Apollo, and welcomes guests Chris Addison and Tim Vine. (R)
12.05 Film: Life. (1999) Prison comedy, starring Eddie Murphy.
1.45 Weatherview. **1.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.40 Film:** Till the End of Time. (1946) **8.20 Film:** Flying Leathernecks. (1951) **10.00** A History of Scotland. (R) **11.00** Map Man. (R) **11.30** Just a Minute. (R) **12.00** The Chef's Protege. (R) **12.30** The Chef's Protege. (R) **1.00** The Chef's Protege. (R) **1.30** The Chef's Protege. (R) **2.00** The Chef's Protege. (R) **2.30** The A to Z of TV Gardening. **2.50** Coast. (R) **3.50** Auction Hero. (R) **4.50 Film:** The Eagle Has Landed. (1976)
7.00 Flog It! Paul Martin and the team visit Wilmslow, Cheshire, where valuable items include jewellery, toys, porcelain and a Georgian tea table. (R)
8.00 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring initiates a recruitment campaign, but makes the mistake of leaving Wilson in charge of the poster. Starring Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. (R)
8.30 Sincerely, F Scott Fitzgerald: A Culture Show Special. To mark a new film adaptation of The Great Gatsby, Jay McInerney explores the life and writing of the author through the letters he sent to editors, publishers, lovers and friends.
9.30 QI XL. Stephen Fry hosts an extended edition of the quiz, with Jo Brand, David Mitchell, Phill Jupitus and Alan Davies answering questions on the theme of intelligence. (R)
10.15 Film: West Is West. (2010) Premiere. Comedy sequel, with Om Puri and Aqib Khan.
11.55 Film: The Walker. (2007) Drama, starring Woody Harrelson.
1.35 This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Special Agent Oso. **6.10** Special Agent Oso. **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Dino Dan. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Canimals. (R) **7.20** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.35** Ultimate Spider-Man. **8.00** Jessie. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Dinner Date. (R) **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **10.15** My Tasty Travels with Lynda Bellingham. (R) **11.15** Saturday Farm. **12.15** ITV News; Weather. **12.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **1.30** River Monsters. (R) **2.30** All Star Family Fortunes. (R) **3.15** The Chase. (R) **4.15 Film:** The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery. (1966)
6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.
6.15 ITV News; Weather.
6.30 You've Been Framed! Top 100 Holidays. A countdown of 100 vacation-themed camcorder calamities and viewer-submitted mobile-phone clips. (R)
7.30 Britain's Got Talent. More hopefuls take their moment in the spotlight in an attempt to impress the four judges and secure a place in the live semi-finals.
8.45 The Cube. Two more contestants face the challenge. Last in the series.
9.45 The Jonathan Ross Show. With Lee Evans, Philip Glenister, Marc Warren, Max Beesley, Gemma Arterton and Primal Scream. Last in the series.
10.45 ITV News; Weather.
11.00 Film: Mickey Blue Eyes. (1999) Romantic comedy, with Hugh Grant and Jeanne Tripplehorn.
12.55 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Starter Wife. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 The Treacle People. (R) **6.10** The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** VW Racing Cup. **7.00** The Grid. **7.25** FIM Superbike World Championship. **7.55** The Morning Line. **8.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** Heston's Fantastical Food. (R) **1.35** Channel 4 Racing. **4.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.40** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.15** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.50** Come Dine with Me. (R)
6.20 Come Dine with Me. Driving instructor Alison Firth hosts the final dinner party in Warwickshire. (R)
6.50 Channel 4 News.
7.15 Film: Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer. (2007) The superhero team faces a powerful alien sent to prepare the Earth for destruction by its planet-eating master. Fantasy, starring Ioan Gruffudd and Michael Chiklis.
9.00 Film: Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps. (2010) Premiere. Ruthless stockbroker Gordon Gekko helps a young banker get revenge on the company that drove his mentor to suicide. Drama sequel, with Michael Douglas and Shia LaBeouf.
11.40 Derren Brown: The Assassin. The illusionist investigates whether somebody could be hypnotised into killing a celebrity as part of a series of large-scale social experiments. (R)
12.40 Film: Crash. (2004) **2.30** Southland. (R) **3.10** Hollyoaks. (R) **5.15** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.15** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. (R) **10.50** Batman: The Brave and the Bold. **11.15 Film:** Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. (1971) **1.15 Film:** Darby's Rangers. (1957) **3.35 Film:** The Dam Busters. (1954)
6.05 Last of the Dambusters: Revealed. RAF veteran George Johnson revisits the scene of his most memorable mission. (R)
6.55 5 News Weekend.
7.00 Cricket on 5. England v New Zealand. Mark Nicholas presents action from the third day in the first Test of the two-match series, which comes from Lord's.
8.05 NCIS. Gibbs discovers Tony's father is linked to the team's latest investigation, which involves an assassination attempt on a Saudi prince. (R)
9.00 NCIS. Tony and Ziva visit Paris to escort Nora Williams, the key witness in an embezzlement case, back to America – but on the return trip they realise there is an assassin on the plane. (R)
9.55 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. A teenager is found bludgeoned to death at a hotel.
10.50 Law & Order: Criminal Intent. A boxer comes under suspicion of murder.
11.45 True Crimes: The First 72 Hours.
12.10 SuperCasino. **4.00** Michaela's Wild Challenge. (R) **4.45** County Secrets. (R) **5.00** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.10** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.15** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.35** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Top Gear **7.50** The Premier League's Most Amazing Moments **9.45 Film:** Face/Off (1997). Action thriller, starring John Travolta and Nicolas Cage.
BBC Four
7.00 Swarm: Nature's Incredible Invasions **8.00** British Masters **9.00** Arne Dahl: Many Waters – Part One **10.30** Sings James Bond **11.30** Omnibus: John Barry – A Licence to Thrill
ITV2
2.05 Film: Kindergarten Cop (1990) **4.15** You've Been Framed! **6.30 Film:** Small Soldiers (1998). Children's adventure, with Kirsten Dunst. **8.45** Britain's Got More Talent **9.45** You've Been Framed! Forever **10.50** Celebrity Juice **11.35** Britain's Got Talent
ITV3
3.40 Jane Eyre **5.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Lewis. A religious fanatic is found beaten and drowned in his bath. **11.00** Wire in the Blood
ITV4
11.00 Live Indian Premier League Cricket. Kings XI Punjab v Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bangalore v Chennai Super Kings. **8.00** Indian Premier League Greatest Games **9.00 Film:** The Boat That Rocked (2009) **11.40 Film:** Year of the Dragon (1985)
E4
5.30 The Mindy Project **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** Happy Endings **7.30** How I Met Your Mother **8.30** 2 Broke Girls **9.00 Film:** Mission: Impossible III (2006) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory
Film4
3.05 Paper Moon (1973) **5.10** California Man (1992) **7.00** America's Sweethearts (2001) **9.00** Saving Private Ryan (1998)

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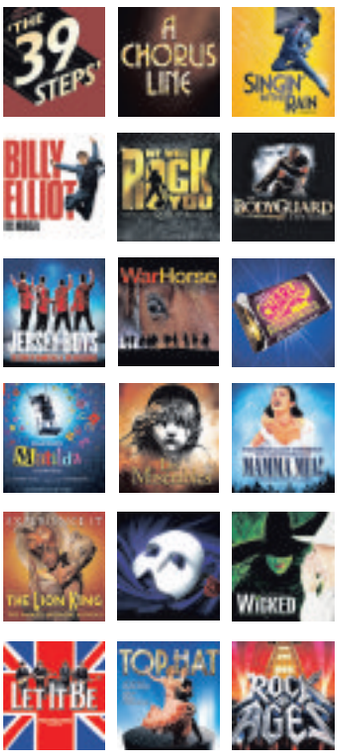

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What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 19.05.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Jason Isaacs

Case Histories
BBC1, 8.30pm
Jason Isaacs returns to his role as detective Jackson Brodie in crime drama Case Histories, set in Edinburgh and adapted from Kate Atkinson's series of novels of the same name. Having been on a break since the first season ended in 2011, the first episode sees Brodie approached by a woman who asks for his help in finding her birth parents, and his investigation leads him to a secret which has remained hidden for 35 years. Victoria Wood also stars as a retired police officer, who feels compelled to act when she sees a little girl being abused by her mother.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Live Worship for Pentecost. **11.00** Sunday Politics: Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.20** Countryfile. (R) **1.15** Bargain Hunt. **2.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **3.15** Points of View. **3.30** Lifeline. **3.40** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.25** Songs of Praise. **5.00** Chelsea Flower Show 2013.

6.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.
6.30 Countryfile. Reports from the Thames Valley, where Matt Baker finds out why Henley-on-Thames is such a breeding ground for rowers and Julia Bradbury hunts for giant wood ants in Burnham Beeches.
7.30 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce and the team are at Stowe House in Buckinghamshire, where former racing driver Jackie Stewart is among the visitors bringing in their antiques and collectibles. Red button viewers can play along by guessing the valuations.
8.30 Case Histories. New series. Crime drama, starring Jason Isaacs as PI Jackson Brodie. A search for a woman's birth parents leads to the heart of 1970s police corruption. Victoria Wood guest stars.
10.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.
10.25 Match of the Day. Highlights of the final matches of the Premier League season, including Wigan Athletic v Aston Villa at the DW Stadium and Newcastle United v Arsenal at St James' Park.
12.00 The Football League Show. **1.00 Film:** The Glass Shield. (1995) **2.45** Weatherview. **2.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.30 Film:** Ruthless. (1948) **8.15** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.45** The A to Z of TV Gardening. **9.30** The Beechgrove Garden. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Chinese Food Made Easy. (R) **12.00** Great British Food Revival. **12.30** Live MotoGP. **2.15** EastEnders. (R) **4.05** Final Score.

6.30 Porridge. Crafty con Fletcher helps new inmate Godber settle in by giving him a few lessons on coping with prison life. Comedy, starring Ronnie Barker. (R)
7.00 Racing Legends: Jackie Stewart. Chef James Martin joins Jackie Stewart on a road trip through the Alps in a classic supercar to retrace the life and career of the three-time Formula One world champion. (R)
8.00 Ice Age Giants. New series. Alice Roberts investigates the lives and habitats of the creatures that dominated the planet 40,000 years ago, beginning with giant mammals that roamed North America.
9.00 Australia with Simon Reeve. New series. The adventurer begins a journey across the country, discovering how the camel is threatening the fragile desert ecosystem in the heart of Australia.
10.00 Mock the Week Looks Back at Food & Drink. Another themed selection of material from the show's archives. Last in the series.
10.30 Film: Blood Diamond. (2006) Action thriller, starring Leonardo DiCaprio.
12.45 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **1.40** Holby City. (R) **2.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Special Agent Oso. **6.10** Special Agent Oso. **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.55** Dino Dan. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Canimals. (R) **7.20** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.30** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **8.00** Sonny with a Chance. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Country House Sunday. **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **10.20** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **11.20** Love Your Garden. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25 Film:** Murder on the Orient Express. (1974) **2.50** Britain's Got Talent. (R) **4.10 Film:** Evan Almighty. (2007) **5.55** You've Been Framed! Top 100 Kids. (R)

6.45 Regional Programme; Weather.
7.00 ITV News; Weather.
7.15 Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts a revival of the game show in which contestants guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues, before one of them plays to win £50,000.
8.00 The British Soap Awards 2013. The stars of Coronation Street, EastEnders, Emmerdale, Hollyoaks and Doctors gather as Phillip Schofield hosts the annual awards ceremony honouring TV's most popular soaps.
10.00 ITV News; Weather.
10.15 Film: Children of Men. (2006) In a future stricken by mass infertility, a former activist tries to protect the only pregnant woman in the world. Thriller, starring Clive Owen, Michael Caine and Julianne Moore.
12.15 The Store. **2.15** Monk. (R) **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.05** Freesports on 4. **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30 Film:** Big Momma's House 2. (2006) **4.30** Deal or No Deal. **5.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R)

6.30 Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud revisits a prefabricated-home project in west Cumbria to find out whether Alan and Judith Dawson are happy with the finished product. (R)
7.30 Channel 4 News.
8.00 World's Weirdest Weather. Alex Beresford reveals the power of air and its role in the creation of strange weather events, from tornados spinning on the spot to dust storms, double rainbows and mirages.
9.00 Film: The Social Network. (2010) Premiere. Fact-based drama following internet billionaire Mark Zuckerberg's rise to wealth and fame, and the enemies he made along the way. With Jesse Eisenberg.
11.20 Don't Blame Facebook. Documentary tracking down people who have made extraordinary blunders on social media websites, revealing the potential dangers of sharing too much information online. (R)

12.25 Film: Walk the Line. (2005) **2.40** Southland. (R) **3.25** Gok's Style Secrets. (R) **4.20** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.15** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) **6.25** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **6.30** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.45** Chloe's Closet. **6.55** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.15** Animal Antics. (R) **7.20** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **7.35** City of Friends. (R) **7.45** Little Princess. (R) **8.00** Abby's Flying Fairy School. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.35** Mio Mao. (R) **8.45** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.30** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **9.45** Jelly Jamm. (R) **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. (R) **10.35** Batman: The Brave and the Bold. (R) **11.00** Inside Hollywood. **11.05** Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Wild. (R) **12.05** Aliens: Are We Alone? (R) **1.05 Film:** Godzilla. (1998) **3.40 Film:** Hoodwinked. (2005) **5.15 Film:** Cats & Dogs. (2001)

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v New Zealand.
8.00 Once Upon a Time. Spencer implicates Ruby in a murder.
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Film: Righteous Kill. (2008) Premiere. Two New York detectives pursue a vigilante murdering criminals who escape justice, but realise the killer may be a cop. Crime thriller, with Robert De Niro.
10.55 Film: Out of Time. (2003) Crime thriller, starring Denzel Washington.

1.05 SuperCasino. **3.55** Michaela's Wild Challenge. (R) **4.45** County Secrets. (R) **4.55** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.10** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.15** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.35** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 How to Win Eurovision **9.00** Russell Howard's Good News Extra **9.45** Sweat the Small Stuff: Extra Sweaty **10.30** Family Guy **11.15** American Dad!

BBC Four
7.00 She-Wolves: England's Early Queens **8.00** The Review Show **9.00** The Man Who Shot Beautiful Women **10.00** Frank Skinner on George Formby **11.00** Rock 'n' Roll Britannia

ITV2
2.15 Film: Mamma Mia! (2008) **4.25** You've Been Framed! **4.55** Britain's Got Talent **6.10** Britain's Got More Talent **7.15** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **7.45 Film:** The Incredible Hulk (2008) **10.00** The British Soap Awards 2013: The Party **11.05** Celebrity Juice **11.45** Celebrity Juice: Soap Special

ITV3
2.40 The Railway Children **4.40** Goodnight Mister Tom **6.50** Agatha Christie's Poirot **8.00** Vera **10.00** Prime Suspect

ITV4
11.00 Live Indian Premier League Cricket **8.00** River Monsters **9.00 Film:** Space Cowboys (2000) Space adventure, starring Clint Eastwood. **11.30 Film:** Green Street (2005)

E4
4.35 Revenge **5.35** New Girl **6.00** The Mindy Project **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.00 Film:** The Simpsons Movie (2007). Animated comedy, with the voice of Dan Castellaneta. **9.50** Rude Tube: Welcome to 2013

Film4
3.05 Hope Floats (1998) **5.15** Just My Luck (2006) **7.20** The Wedding Date (2005) **9.00** What Happens in Vegas (2008) **10.55** Shinjuku Incident (2009)

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What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY
Blind Trust, Channel 5, 3.15pm
An innocent woman stands trial for murdering her boyfriend and her best friend. When she is convicted, she manages to escape custody and goes on the run, hoping to find evidence of her innocence – only to discover her own lawyer is responsible for framing her. Thriller, starring Jessica Capshaw and Art Hindle. (2007)

TUESDAY
Bandits, BBC1, 11.35pm
Two convicts escape from prison and embark on a high-profile bank-robbing spree. A car crash leaves them with an extra accomplice – a bored housewife yearning for adventure, but before long her presence begins to disrupt their criminal enterprise and friendship, as well as their plans to retire to Mexico. Crime comedy, starring Bruce Willis, Billy Bob Thornton and Cate Blanchett. Directed by Barry Levinson. (2001)

WEDNESDAY
Phenomenon, BBC1, 11.35pm
An unassuming car mechanic observes a peculiar bright light one evening on the way home from a bar, and finds himself transformed into a genius with telekinetic powers. However, he is unprepared for the problems that lie ahead, as he struggles to woo a divorced single mother while coping with his new-found gift. Drama, starring John Travolta, Kyra Sedgwick, Forest Whitaker and Robert Duvall. (1996)

Made of Honor, Friday, Channel 5, 10pm

THURSDAY
The Other Man, BBC1, 11.35pm
A husband learns his wife is having an affair when he discovers provocative photos of her with another man. He resolves to track down her lover and exact his revenge but when he is set to confront the man about his misdeeds, he instead strikes up an unlikely friendship, making him question whether he should continue with his vengeful scheme. Drama, starring Liam Neeson, Antonio Banderas, Laura Linney and Romola Garai. (2008)

FRIDAY
Made of Honor, Channel 5, 10pm
A single man realises he is in love with his best friend, but has never done anything about it out of a fear of commitment. Everything changes when she returns from a business trip to Scotland with a new fiance in tow, leaving him determined to make sure the wedding does not go ahead. Romantic comedy, starring Patrick Dempsey, Michelle Monaghan and Kevin McKidd. (2008)

Pick of the Week

Bonnie aims for a Total Eclipse of the charts

Happy 58th birthday, Eurovision. Or should we say, Pump-Pump. Bem-Bom. Tom Tom Tom. Boom Boom. Sing Sang Song.

They might not mean much to you, but to Eurovision fans, such nonsense lyrics bring back memorable nights of bizarre costumes, weird performances and eccentric singers.

The the world's number-one cheesy music-fest is knocking on a bit, and is only a few short years away from claiming its bus pass – some might even suggest it's past its sell-by date, or that it's now so far removed from the times that it's taken a 'pipe-and-slippers' approach to music.

But if this year's entrants are anything to go by, the competition seems to have had an injection of youth serum.

Denmark's Emmelie de Forest is expected to do well. The 20-year-old appears to be channelling our own Sandie Shaw (who was the UK's first winner back in 1967 with Puppet on a String) on stage – well, she performs without shoes anyway.

Her track, Only Teardrops, is so catchy, she's the runaway favourite, and votes from her nation's close neighbours are expected to push her to victory.

Norway's I Feed You My Love has been described as a cross between Daft Punk and Metallica, so we can hardly wait to hear that.

Marco Mengoni is Italy's X Factor champion, and his piano ballad could surprise a few on the night.

Russia will be attempting to go one better than they did last year when they were runners-up. Frankly, their rather bland song could put some voters off, so they're pinning their hopes on the appeal of singer Dina Garipova – it's a long shot, but it might just work...

And then, of course, there's the UK's Bonnie Tyler. We've been holding out for a Eurovision hero (see what we did there?) since Katrina and Waves were our last winners back in 1997.

There was a time when the British public voted for a representative in the Song for Europe competition, but after a woeful few years, folk at the BBC felt they knew best and began choosing themselves.

The idea didn't work too badly with Blue, who finished 11th, but seasoned crooner Engelbert Humperdinck came a disappointing 25th in 2012.

Bonnie is also a veteran performer, and the nation will be behind her when she bashes out Believe In Me in Malmo. Hopefully, it won't be nul point for the pocket Welsh wonder, but we're not expecting great things either – so we'll be thrilled to bits if we're wrong.

Lewis Carnie, BBC Head of Special Projects, says: "Bonnie is an artist with an international reputation and I am delighted that she has chosen to represent the UK in this year's contest. It is a great song and a truly wonderful performance that I am sure will do the nation proud."

As for Bonnie herself, she can't wait for the night to start: "I am truly honoured and delighted to be able to represent the United Kingdom at Eurovision, and especially with such a fabulous song. I promise to give this everything that I've got for the UK!"

Ding-Dinger-Dong to that!

Bonnie Tyler, Eurovision Song Contest 2013, Saturday, BBC1, 8pm

Best of the Rest

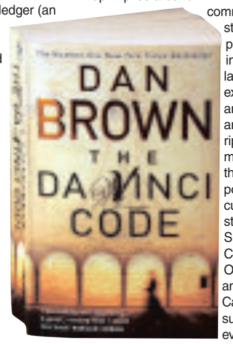
MONDAY
Hillsborough: How They Buried the Truth
BBC1, 9pm
On April 15, 1989, Britain's worst football disaster took place at Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough Stadium. Ninety-six Liverpool fans were killed as a result of a crush, with 766 more sustaining injuries. In December last year, following an inquiry by the Hillsborough Independent Panel, the original verdict of accidental death for the 96 who perished was overturned; a new inquest will take place next year. This documentary, presented by reporter Peter Marshall, tries to unearth why various investigations into what happened on that tragic day in 1989 failed to reveal the truth. There's also a chance to see previously unseen footage of events.

The Job Lot
ITV, 9.30pm
Sadly scheduled after Vicious, the brilliantly bitchy Ian McKellen, Derek Jacobi sitcom, this can look like a bit of an anti-climax to ITV's Monday night comedy double bill, but the latest offering of Midlands-based mirth may tickle your fancy. With Brownall job centre due for an anonymous inspection, Trish (Sarah Hadland) is looking out for the person who's going to file a report. Meanwhile, security guard Janette (Angela Curran) is determined to beat the Great Barr branch in the league table, and Karl (Russell Tovey) and George (Adeel Akhtar) join forces to interrogate a pair of big-time benefit cheats.

TUESDAY
Caroline Quentin's National Parks
ITV, 8pm
The final programme in the series sees Caroline explore the New Forest, which nestles in the counties of Hampshire and Wiltshire. Caroline's first taste of life there sees her dangling above it – in the basket of a hot air balloon. Then she meets some of its most famous residents, the ponies born in the park that are often completely untamed, despite having owners, and helps catch a foal that will be sold and trained to be ridden. But it's the trees that make the area so special, and Caroline climbs one of them with help from tree surgeon Jo Hedger (an apt name if ever there was one) before relating why her experiences have convinced her that National Parks should be an important part of everyone's lives.

Town with Nicholas Crane
BBC2, 9pm
If he was an actor, you'd be calling Nicholas Crane typecast by now. He's probably most famous for his work on Coast, the BBC's series in which he travels the length and breadth of the UK's shoreline in an effort to bring us fascinating footage from the towns and settlements along the way. In this new BBC series, however, he's visiting towns around the UK, beginning with Oban – which is situated on Scotland's west coast. Don't despair, though, because no matter how familiar the concept might be, this is still a fascinating documentary. Here, the geographer and adventurer explains the surprising role Oban played in the Cold War, visits one of Scotland's oldest distilleries and meets artist John Lowrie Morrison at his studio.

WEDNESDAY
Bankers
BBC2, 9pm
When you think of a banker, the image that comes to mind might well be that of a greasy-haired man in a pin-striped suit, greedily counting coins stacked up in piles around him. This might be picture more commonly found in a cartoon strip, but in the wake of the payment protection insurance scandal (PPI), the last in this three-part series examines whether there is any truth in this stereotype, and what possibly caused a rip-off on such a monumental scale. Whatever the cause, the result of the policy is a compensation bill currently estimated at a staggering £25 billion, and Sir Philip Hampton, RBS Chairman, Antonio Horta Osorio, Lloyds Group CEO, and the Archbishop of Canterbury consider how such a damaged system can ever be re-built.



The Da Vinci Code: The True Story, Thursday, Channel 5, 8pm

THURSDAY
The Da Vinci Code: The True Story
Channel 5, 8pm
When Dan Brown penned The Da Vinci Code, it proved you don't need to be the best writer in the world to shift books by the truck load. You just need a controversial idea, and enough pace to keep readers turning pages. For newcomers, the story centres on Professor Robert Langdon, who's desperately trying to discover a mystery involving a speculative relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene. This documentary examines the possibility of Rosslyn Chapel in Midlothian being the final resting place of the Holy Grail, and attempts to find out the secrets behind Leonardo da Vinci's mirror writing. Among the contributors are historian Mario Taddei, art restorer Cecilia Frosinini and graphic designer John Langdon, who inspired the heroic Professor Langdon.

FRIDAY
Life of Crime
ITV, 9pm
The last of the current series take place in the present day, and Denise Woods (Hayley Atwell) is interviewed for the position of superintendent. However, her home life is a mess. Ex-husband Ray (Richard Coyle) reveals that her 19-year-old estranged daughter Charlotte (Ruby Thomas) is pregnant. Meanwhile, the case of a recent murder victim flags up the same 'unknown' DNA from 1997 and 1985, so the police officer hopes she can put her demons to rest by finding Amy Reid's killer. Through profiling, Denise builds a picture of two men, one dependent on the other, raping and killing together at music events.

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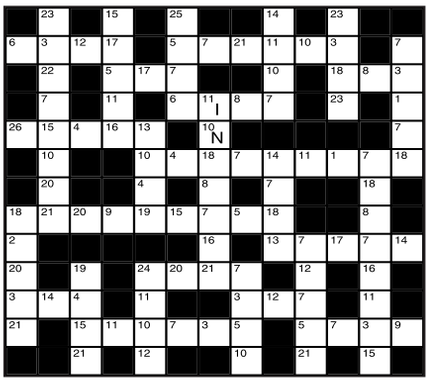
Brain Gym

No.221

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



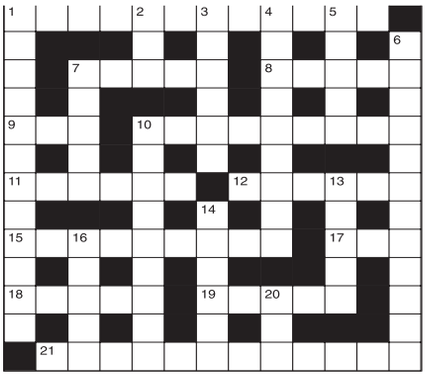
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10 N	23
11 I	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
I	T	Z	W	O	U	P	N	H	Q	S	C	A
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
L	R	Y	F	V	G	J	E	B	K	X	D	M

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Lighted match? (8,4)
7. Very much inclined to soak! (5)
8. Loop with a ring in the nose (5)
9. Pot plant? (3)
10. Turning quite sour and blue-green! (9)
11. Duty-free (6)
12. Descriptive of a man who can't settle (2,4)
15. Drivers of it can give one a lift no more (3-6)
17. Hasten from the chief (3)
18. Either way, it's essential to a helicopter (5)
19. The flighty take to them (5)
21. They throw things around spiritedly (12)

Down

1. How one knows immediately that someone is surprised? (4,3,5)
2. Stamp that will expire? (3)
3. Significance of what you bring in (6)
4. One taking part in the arms race? (3-6)
5. N. Zealander in the cinema or in the theatre (5)
6. Always greater, in spite of that (12)
7. Not immediately required to show mercy (5)
10. The one you keep under your hat? (3,6)
13. Those reformed show character (5)
14. An artist who might be other things to her (6)
16. Excel with an al-fresco celebration (5)
20. She is seven points short (3)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Recollection (12)
7. Gloomy (5)
8. Bring on oneself (5)
9. Day before (3)
10. Desecration (9)
11. Agree (6)
12. Price list (6)
15. Explain (9)
17. Tree (3)
18. Wake up (5)
19. Revile (5)
21. Airing frame (7-5)

Down

1. Brazilian port (3-2-7)
2. Born (3)
3. Rigid (6)
4. Get rid of (9)
5. Hidden store (5)
6. Gratis (4,2,6)
7. Sediment (5)
10. Feeling (9)
13. Silly (5)
14. Leave empty (6)
16. Normal (5)
20. Expression of disgust (3)

Sudoku

			9		2		4	
	4				1	5	7	
1		6						9
					9			3
7		5		1		6		2
3			7		8			
		7				9		
	1	2	8		6		5	7
	6		1		7			4

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

6	5	2	4	8	7	1	3	9
8	3	1	6	2	9	4	5	7
7	4	9	3	5	1	6	2	8
9	6	3	5	7	4	8	1	2
2	1	7	8	3	6	5	9	4
5	8	4	9	1	2	3	7	6
4	7	8	1	9	5	2	6	3
3	2	5	7	6	8	9	4	1
1	9	6	2	4	3	7	8	5

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 4 Appeals; 8 Hearts; 9 Contest; 10 Recipe; 11 Peered; 12 Portrait; 18 Larboard; 20 Detour; 21 Better; 22 Cortege; 23 Scores; 24 Regatta. Down: 1 Therapy; 2 Lascars; 3 Stupor; 5 Prompter; 6 Esteem; 7 Lessee; 13 All right; 14 Canters; 15 Address; 16 Decode; 17 Portia; 19 Bleach. QUICK - Across: 4 Special; 8 Thread; 9 Alarmed; 10 Putrid; 11 Malady; 12 Necklace; 18 Allocate; 20 Strand; 21 Racket; 22 Sublime; 23 Loosen; 24 Terrace. Down: 1 Stipend; 2 Protect; 3 Labial; 5 Pell-mell; 6 Circle; 7 Agenda; 13 Academic; 14 Mawkish; 15 Destiny; 16 Attune; 17 Taller; 19 Orator.

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Property

Semi with original features is for sale

Worton Kelly is the estate agent handling the sale of this three-bedroom, semi-detached home

The low-maintenance gravelled garden has shrubs and trees

BOASTING many original features, this semi-detached house in Hall Green Road, West Bromwich, is for sale with a £145,000 price tag.

The property benefits from double glazing and gas central heating where specified, off-road parking and rear garden with accommodation briefly comprising three bedrooms, two reception rooms, fitted kitchen, utility room, downstairs WC and family bathroom.

On the ground floor the entrance hall has a Minton tiled floor and doors to the dining room which measures 13ft 1in by 11ft 5in. The room has a feature chimney breast, while the lounge has a chimney breast with gas fire.

The kitchen, measuring 10ft 11in by 9ft 1in, is fitted with a range of wall and base units. It also has plumbing for awashing machine and a dishwasher, and there is a door to the WC.

On the first floor are three bedrooms and a bathroom with bath, shower cubicle, wash hand basin and WC.

Outside to the front is a block paved driveway with access to a garage.

The rear garden has a slabbed patio area and gravelled area with borders and shrubs.

The estate agent handling the sale is Worton Kelly. Contact the firm by calling 0121 588 5666.

Building firm Redrow wins top honour for its service

JUST weeks after being awarded five stars for customer satisfaction nationwide, Redrow Homes Midlands is celebrating a coveted honour for the service it provides to buyers.

The Tamworth-based division of the housebuilder has earned a Gold Award after an independent national survey conducted by In-house Research.

They found 97.8 per cent of customers in the West Midlands would recommend Redrow to others.

It follows hot on the heels of a third successive five-star rating in the Home Builders' Federation annual customer satisfaction survey, a standard reserved again for those who achieve at least a 90 per cent level of customer recommendation and overall satisfaction.

Pauline Turnbull, sales director for Redrow Homes (Midlands), said: "These awards are the benchmark against which we measure our customer service levels.

"The gold award from In-house Research is a highly sought-after accolade and we are very proud to have achieved the standard for a second year. However, we will not be resting on our laurels. We remain dedicated to ensuring the joy experienced by our home owners is second to none."

In-house conduct research for all the major housebuilders, Redrow included, and continuously measure their customer satisfaction scores.

Customers were asked a specific yes or no question as to whether they would recommend Redrow based on their experience.

The survey is conducted over the telephone and with a response rate of more than 70 per cent.

Satisfaction

Malcolm Pitcher, managing director of In-house Research said: 'It's great to see yet again during 2012 that our clients are achieving high scores for overall customer satisfaction and recommendation.."

Redrow (Midlands) is building homes at sites in the region, including Castle View, Stafford; Compton Park, Wolverhampton, and Cawston Grange, Rugby.

To find out where Redrow is building visit www.redrow.co.uk

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1	854 COVENTRY ROAD, SMALL HEATH, BIRMINGHAM B10 0TZ	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £90,000 - £98,000
2	198 BRICKHOUSE LANE, WEST BROMWICH WEST MIDLANDS B70 0EA	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £45,000 - £50,000
3	88 DURLEY DEAN ROAD, SELLY OAK, BIRMINGHAM B29 6RX	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £85,000 - £90,000
4	55 CAUSEWAY, ROWLEY REGIS, WEST MIDLANDS B65 9AA	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £58,000 - £64,000
5	209 PRIORY ROAD, HALL GREEN, BIRMINGHAM B28 0CT	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £90,000 - £97,000
6	REAR WORKSHOP 227B DOUGLAS ROAD, ACOCKS GREEN, BIRMINGHAM B27 6EY	Freehold Vacant Commercial ..... £4,000 - £8,000
7	15 PEMBROKE CLOSE, WILLENHALL, WEST MIDLANDS WV12 5SJ	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £72,000 - £78,000
8	1 CRANBOURNE ROAD, KINGSTANDING, BIRMINGHAM B44 0BU	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £65,000 - £70,000
9	567 BORDESLEY GREEN, BIRMINGHAM B9 5XY	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £105,000 - £110,000
10	128 LODGE ROAD, HOCKLEY, BIRMINGHAM B18 5RJ	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £68,000 - £74,000
11	8 ELY CLOSE, CHELMSLEY WOOD, BIRMINGHAM B37 5RU	Freehold Residential Investment ..... £72,000 - £76,000
12	1 AUCKLAND ROAD, SPARKBROOK, BIRMINGHAM B11 1RH	Leasehold Vacant Commercial ..... £130,000 - £150,000
13	2, ST STEPHENS ROAD, SELLY OAK, BIRMINGHAM B29 7RP	Freehold Vacant Commercial ..... £92,000 - £98,000
14	MIDDLEMORE LANE, ALDRIDGE, WALSALL WS9 8SP	Freehold Vacant Commercial ..... £270,000 - £295,000
15	UNIT 99, PORTLAND STREET, WALSALL WS2 8AB	Freehold Vacant Commercial ..... £150,000 - £170,000
16	22 HIGHGATE SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM B12 0QU	Freehold Vacant Commercial ..... £170,000 - £195,000
17	299 DUDLEY ROAD, ROWLEY REGIS, WEST MIDLANDS B65 8LY	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £90,000 - £95,000
18	82 HOLLY ROAD, HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM B20 2DA	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £120,000 - £126,000
19	217-219 CHERRYWOOD ROAD, BIRMINGHAM B9 4XD	Leasehold Vacant Commercial ..... £45,000 - £52,000
20	9 IVOR ROAD, ERDINGTON, BIRMINGHAM B23 6TE	Freehold Commercial Investment ..... £120,000 - PLUS
21	233 LOZELLS ROAD, LOZELLS, BIRMINGHAM B19 1RJ	Freehold Commercial Investment ..... £125,000 - £130,000
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23	45 NANAIMO WAY, KINGSWINFORD, WEST MIDLANDS DY6 8TY	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £48,000 - £53,000
24	43 THORNCLIFFE ROAD, BIRMINGHAM B44 9DB	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £95,000 - £99,000
25	38 JACKSON ROAD, ALUM ROCK, BIRMINGHAM B8 3AS	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £80,000 - £85,000
26	1 HALESOWEN STREET, ROWLEY REGIS, WEST MIDLANDS B65 0HG	Freehold Vacant Commercial ..... £130,000 - £150,000
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29	51 REGENT STREET, WILLENHALL, WEST MIDLANDS WV13 1DL	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £48,000 - £54,000
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31	33 CITY ROAD, BIRMINGHAM B16 0HH	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £148,000 - £158,000
32	5-10 BROAD STREET, OLDBURY WEST MIDLANDS B69 4SH	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £120,000 - £126,000
33	96 BROAD STREET, BIRMINGHAM B15 1AU	Freehold Vacant Commercial ..... £230,000 - £250,000
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46	APARTMENT 4, SUN HOUSE, 9 - 10 BENNETTS HILL, BIRMINGHAM B2 5RS	Leasehold Residential Investment ..... £63,000 - £68,000
47	APARTMENT 30, SUN HOUSE, 9 -10 BENNETTS HILL, BIRMINGHAM B2 5RS	Leasehold Residential Investment ..... £70,000 - £78,000
48	41 HOLBORN HILL, NECHELLS, BIRMINGHAM B7 5PA	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £75,000 - £80,000
49	74 BEECHES ROAD, WEST BROMWICH , WEST MIDLANDS B70 6HH	Freehold Residential Investment ..... £125,000 - £145,000
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65	124 ASHBROOK ROAD, STRICKLEY, BIRMINGHAM B30 2XB	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £85,000 - £90,000
66	FLAT 2, OAKHURST GRANGE, 353 BIRMINGHAM ROAD, SUTTON COLDFIEL B72 1DL	Leasehold Vacant Residential ..... £45,000 - £50,000
67	THE OLD COACH HOUSE, OFF GREEN STREET, SMETHWICK, WEST MIDLANDS B67 7EB	Freehold Vacant Commercial ..... £35,000 - £39,000
68	4 NEWTON PLACE, HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM B18 5JY	Freehold Residential Investment ..... £65,000 - £69,000
69	83 BRADES ROAD, OLDBURY, WEST MIDLANDS B69 2EB	Freehold Vacant Commercial ..... £25,000 - £30,000
70	46 FARLEY ROAD, ERDINGTON, BIRMINGHAM B23 7TP	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £38,000 - £44,000
71	168 ALEXANDER ROAD, ACOCKS GREEN, BIRMINGHAM B27 6HA	Freehold Residential Investment ..... £85,000 - £90,000
72	22 MILCOTE ROAD, SOLIHULL, WEST MIDLANDS B91 1JW	Freehold Vacant Residential ..... £150,000 - £165,000

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Property

How to build your dream green home

While steel or timber-frame houses are good choices, there are many other building methods to consider

FINANCING a self-build isn't easy, especially in this economic climate, but it's possible.

Selling your home, or releasing the equity in it, is one option (and ideal for buying the building plot), but many self-builders need a loan for the project, and a self-build mortgage is a popular choice.

With this kind of mortgage, the money is released in stages as the building work progresses.

To qualify you'll have to provide more information than for a standard residential mortgage, including the plans for the new house, the projected costs, and proof of planning permission.

If you haven't sold your home and want to continue living there during the build, you can have a self-build mortgage alongside your existing mortgage, as long as the figures stack up. And as with any big building project, it's important to have a sizeable contingency fund in case anything goes wrong with your finances or the build.

The good news for self-builders is that they can claim back the VAT on the building materials, which is one of the reasons why self-building can work out cheaper than buying a house.

Popular

The building method and materials you choose will have a big impact on the cost, although there are practical and aesthetic considerations as well as financial ones.

Timber-frame houses are popular with self-builders because they can be erected quickly.

Wood is also natural, environmentally friendly and aesthetically appealing. And it's more durable than you might think – softwood frames can last around 200 years.

An alternative to a timber frame is a steel one. Steel frames allow more flexibility with the design and are strong, resistant to the weather and quick to put up.

You may know which building method you want to use, or you may be happy to be guided by your architect, but the method and design obviously have to be compatible.

One of the great things about self-building is that it's easy to make your new home environmentally friendly.

As well as obvious things such as insulating as much as possible and choosing energy-efficient windows and glazing, self-builders can incorporate solar panels, heat pumps, grey-water recycling systems, and biomass boilers.

Combine measures like these with environmentally friendly building materials and you can create an extremely green home which is good for your bank balance, because it keeps your energy bills down, and good for the planet.

Easy ways of getting the most out of your bedroom

A RECENT survey reveals a quarter of all couples in the West Midlands have regular rows over something as trivial as the state of the bedroom.

Worse still, for one in 10 disputes over disorder get so bad that they opt to sleep in separate beds.

Having an untidy bedroom means there's little chance for romance.

Six in 10 say they'd be put off by a potential partner if their bedroom was cluttered and two thirds view a scruffy bedroom as the sign of a sloppy personality.

When it comes to the blaming and shaming, a quarter of women claim men are the messiest, according to the survey by flooring and bedding specialist Carpetright.

While one in five men hold their partners responsible for the slovenly situation for hogging all the storage space.

A picture is painted of a region of hoarders with 44 per cent admitting they have more in their bedroom than ever before despite having less space to put it all.

Mainly, fashion takes the forefront as the struggle for space is for clothes and shoes.

However, one in 10 metrosexual chaps can't find enough space from their grooming products.

The effects on their everyday life are huge. Four in 10 are embarrassed, a fifth unhappy and one in 10 stressed.

Carpetright has teamed up with declutter expert and award-winning property restylist, Alison Armitage, managing director of Home Decluttered, to urge people to streamline their storage for a stress-free bedroom.

Cavernous ottoman style beds offer masses of hidden storage space

Alison comments: "These results really are quite shocking. Obviously, as we all now have more stuff than ever it can be difficult to find enough room for everything.

"However, it's important to remember that a cluttered and untidy room really can impact your wellbeing."

Craig Aquilina, bed buyer at Carpetright adds: "A bedroom should be a place for relaxation to retreat to after a long day's work so it really is important to make it as comfortable and homely as possible.

"In the first instance, we would recommend conducting a thorough clear out and chucking out any items which really aren't needed.

"Then there are a number of clever products which can help maximise the space available such as, a smart storage bed.

"The ottoman style in particular offers masses of hidden storage or why not go for multiple drawers for easy compartmentalisation."

Sleepright at Carpetright offers a collection of divan sets, bed frames, storage beds and mattresses from big brands. For further information head down to your nearest Carpetright store or look online at www.sleepright.co.uk

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LOOK

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Motoring

Compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

BMW sports with four-wheel drive

By Matt Joy

BMW's 3 Series has always been a car for all circumstances – fun to drive but practical and comfortable too.

Over the years, the range has expanded to widen the net still further. The estate Touring, the M3 and the ever-increasing range of diesel offerings meant there has always been a version to suit.

Now there's another side to the 3 Series story with the introduction of the xDrive model.

Four-wheel drive versions outside of the SUV models have been available in Europe since the 1980s, but due to the complexities of right-hand drive conversions it has never made it across to the UK.

That's all changed with the 320i xDrive now on sale. You won't spot any external differences bar the additional badging. The 3 Series is as handsome and clean-cut as ever, with the slimmer nose giving it a more purposeful look.

But this is no pseudo-SUV, it is designed to be just as the regular saloon with enhanced traction.

Currently available only with the 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol version, the 320i xDrive is not short of power. The four-cylinder unit offers up a handy 184bhp and 199lb/ft of torque, fed to all four wheels through a choice of the six-speed manual or eight-speed automatic gearbox.

A new addition to the BMW 3 Series range is the 320i xDrive with four-wheel drive

Inside the BMW 320i, which offers a choice of manual or automatic gearbox

But from behind the wheel, initially at least, you'll be hard pressed to notice anything different – which of course is the whole point.

The manual gearbox operates just as slickly as before, the clutch is smooth and has no extra weight, although it is above average in that respect, so from the driver's perspective, there's nothing extra to worry about.

This is four-wheel drive as an enhancement to performance and safety, not in order to climb mountains, so there are no differential locks or unusual buttons that require your attention.

The 2.0-litre turbo engine almost doesn't feel like one at first either; it is torquey but not at diesel-levels, so it pulls cleanly and smoothly right around the rev range with a muted engine note.

It also bears very close comparison with the standard two-wheel drive car, feeling very brisk rather than hugely rapid. But that's on a bone-dry road. In less than favourable conditions, the extra traction of the 320i xDrive comes into its own. You can deploy all the available power pretty much at will and the drive will be distributed amongst the wheels with the most grip. In normal driving, 60 per cent of the power goes to the rear wheels, but this can switch to 100 per cent towards the front or rear if conditions demand it.

Purists may be concerned that this goes against the BMW philosophy as all its cars have rear-wheel drive and have done so since the start, but this is no less a sports saloon than any other 3 Series.

It steers as sweetly as the standard car despite the slight increase in weight at the front with the additional hardware. And in many respects, it allows you to enjoy all the 3 Series characteristics more of the time. Pressing on out of a greasy bend would have the traction control light flickering away, where in the 320i xDrive it simply grips hard and accelerates.

Such surety is enormously reassuring, so much so that it's easy to forget about it and simply get on with enjoying the drive.

The price premium is a modest £1,500 or so, which stands comparison with other items on the options list such as a top-grade satnav or audio system.

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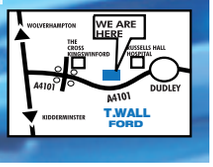

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Motoring

Big van event is offering better deals on Vauxhalls

Dudley Motor Company is taking part in Vauxhall's 10-day Big Van Event from May 17 to May 27

VAN drivers and business bosses are being invited to a Dudley dealers to take advantage of a range of offers being staged as part of its Big Van Event.

Dudley Motor Company, is targeting drivers and bosses in the borough and surrounding areas to take advantage of a range of offers available from Vauxhall.

Between May 17 and 27, the dealership on Trindle Road, is offering customers £500 of fuel free with new vans ordered during the promotion*, as well as 20 per cent off all Genuine Vauxhall accessories** for new van customers.

These savings are on top of Vauxhall's innovative '4x4x4x4' offer, which is already available to van buyers.

Rob Gilbert, General Manager at Dudley Motor Company, said: "We're delighted to be offering van buyers in the area the chance to take advantage of a range of fantastic incentives throughout our Big Van Event.

"From helping to make considerable cost savings at the fuel pumps to discounts on accessories, we're keen to ensure those looking to purchase a new Vauxhall van make the most of the great offers we have available.

"What's more, all Vauxhall Accessories come with a minimum one-year warranty, so customers can drive away knowing they'll receive the best aftercare and service, too.

"We'd like to invite customers to come along to our dealership, join in the event and drive away with some great savings."

Summer

There are many reasons to head to Dudley Motor Company any time this spring and summer to explore the range of offers available on Vauxhall vans, including the manufacturer's great value '4x4x4x4' commercial vehicle incentive.

From Vauxhall's multi-award-winning Combo to the well-equipped, functional and practical Corsavan, versatile Vivaro and hugely capable Movano, customers can enjoy a great deal of choice when selecting their ideal van to suit their business needs and their budget. Those who purchase any new Vauxhall commercial vehicle from the dealer can take advantage of four years' 0 per cent APR representative finance and four years' free servicing including routine service parts and labour.

Plus, customers get the reassurance of four-year breakdown assistance from the AA and four-year warranty.

To take advantage of Vauxhall's 4x4x4x4 offer, van customers simply choose the model that suits their business needs, pay a minimum 20 per cent deposit (plus VAT on the total transaction price), and make regular repayments for the agreed term at zero per cent APR representative for four years.

To find out more about the Big Van Event and the promotions available, please contact Dudley Motor Company at Trindle Road, Dudley DY2 7AZ.

Alternatively, call 01384 454100.

**£500 including VAT Free Fuel offer applies to commercial vehicle orders from 17 to 27 May 2013 only. Exclusions, terms and conditions apply.*

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Final win makes sure club are kings

STOURBRIDGE Chess Club have clinched the Dudley League Division One title.

They needed only a draw away to Boldmere in the final match of the campaign to take the honours.

Stourbridge took a high-grade side to the fixture and first to finish was Dave Scriven, who drew on board three.

Eric Horwill on board four was another winner, gaining a pawn in the opening.

He was then able to swap off pieces, gather an additional pawn and then win the endgame.

Meanwhile, on board one, Nick Arkell weaved a mating net which forced his opponent to resign.

On board two, Nic Fallowfield was a pawn up but accepted a draw given the match position to give Stourbridge a 2.5-1.5 victory and the title.

The club will hold a series of internal events throughout the summer which gives prospective members a chance to meet the Stourbridge players.

Telephone Scriven on 01384 423642 or visit www.stourbridgechess.f9.co.uk for more information.

Knight gets boss job at Peacocks

GORNAL ATHLETIC have appointed former Redditch United assistant boss Brian Knight as their new manager.

He got the nod following three days of interviews with what the club described as "a number of outstanding applicants" as the Peacocks sought a successor to Ian Rowe.

Knight spent a number of years at Redditch, where he was responsible for the development of the youth team.

He then became assistant first team manager.

Chief executive Kevin Williams was delighted with the appointment.

He said the club looks forward to a long and successful relationship with the new man.

"Brian's vision for the future of Gornal Athletic matched exactly with that of the committee," declared Williams.

Boundary catch is outstanding moment

Cricket

Stourbridge 228, Old Elizabethans 176-7. Draw

STOURBRIDGE thirds, buoyed by some significant new players, had the better of this clash at Old Elizabethans but could not force victory.

Stour's stand-in skipper Keith Litster won the toss and chose to bat first.

He was well rewarded with his side piling up 228 off their 50 overs.

Openers Steve Parker and Farkhan Ul Haqu put on 79. Parker was first to go, bowled by Dave Rouse for 39; Ul Haqu was run out for 36 with the score on 90.

Debutant Mohammed Arif capitalised on the solid foundation with a well-made 54. He was eventually caught off the bowling of Mark Keeling.

Another newcomer, Mohammad Tyab, helped Stour past the 200 mark supported by 17-year-old Scott Ludlum.

Tyab was caught for 35 off David Harris, while Ludlum finished the innings unbeaten on 23.

The opposition, in no hurry to compete with Stour's total, ended on 176-7 off 43 overs. Opener Howard Nicholls (58) and No.3 Andrew Tyler (46) top-scored.

Stour's young bowling side kept the reins on the run rate as the rain curtailed the match.

Stour ended up with a well-deserved winning draw. The thirds are currently in sixth position in Division Five (first XIs) of the Worcestershire County League.

Stourbridge 157-9, Old Elizabethans 100-5. Draw

The fourths also took a winning draw as they played host to Old Elizabethans with newly-appointed skipper Daniel Hayward in charge.

Put in to bat, Stour made 157-9 off 45 overs. Alex Spence, batting at No.3, scored 52 before he was out lbw to Tony Neel.

Stour's tail helped the team pass the 150. Teenagers Joshua Tallack (26) and Alex Colman (22 not out) ensured Stour had a decent total at which to bowl.

Neel took 4-27 off his 12 overs.

In reply, the young Stourbridge bowlers kept the opposition batsmen in check. Will Davis conceded just 19 runs off his nine overs while Daniel Hayward bagged 5-12 runs off his seven overs including the wicket of top scorer Nick Pullan, caught and bowled for 45.

The winning draw puts Stourbridge second in Worcestershire County League Division Five, but the match will be remembered longer in Stourbridge circles for a remarkable boundary catch by youngster Billy Green off Hayward which removed Yasein Baig for a duck.

Jones shows no Mersey to overpower opponent

DUDLEY fighter Connor Jones fought his way through to the national semi-finals of the junior ABAs, beating Merseyside boxer Lewis Dobson at Great Barr Leisure Centre.

Jones overpowered the hard-hitting Dobson, from Everton Red Triangle ABC, at 57kg in Class Five. He stood and traded with his feared opponent, hammering home straight shots and tucking up when on the back-foot.

by Craig Birch

Walsall Wood boxer Daniel Breeze also sailed through with a second straight win.

Club-mate Joseph Stevenson and Wednesbury ABC's Jack Wood also progressed from Sunday afternoon's action.

The tournament's national stages are being held at the venue for three weeks in a row, ending next weekend, and Breeze is looking increasingly a dead cert at 66kg in Class Five, for boxers born in 1996, after picking off Sam McLean, from SYD Ringside in West Yorkshire.

Forward

That measured approach brought him a unanimous points win, the same result recorded for Stevenson at 71kg in the most senior of Classes in Six – for boxers born in 1995 – against Harry Woods, from Kirkby ABC, Merseyside.

Wood bullied his way past Thomas McGuiness, from Kirkdale ABC, Liverpool, to record another unanimous point success at 57kg in Class Six.

It's his last chance to win a national title before he progresses to the seniors.

Wodensborough ABC's Benjamin Whittaker and Pleck ABC duo Rocky Lee and Zohaib Hanif all exited by virtue of points losses.

Whittaker will wonder how he lost after opening like a house on fire against Joe Jenkins, from Hillsborough ABC in Sheffield, at 63kg in Class Four – boxers born in 1997.

Whittaker peppered Jenkins' head with shots in the first two rounds and clearly won the first, but Jenkins worked low to the body, which appeared to curry favour with the judges.

Lee had already lost once in the competition – he was defeated over the distance last weekend but his opponent was thrown out of the tournament.

Lee showed heart and perseverance against Dalton Smith, from Steel City ABC, Sheffield, at 57kg in Class Four, but lost unanimously.

Hanif went the same way after being scruffy in his work at 70kg in Class Four against a sharp Zac Stabler, from Bridlington ABC.

Grasshoppers hope to jump over Greyhounds

STOURBRIDGE Rugby Club's amateur sides do battle for bragging rights when they do battle for the Clash of the Titans trophy.

Stourbridge Lions Two (the Greyhounds) and Lions Three (the Grasshoppers) will take to the first team pitch tomorrow night aiming to raise vital funds in support of Mary Stevens Hospice.

The Grasshoppers will be looking to avenge last season's heavy defeat with a return to winning ways against their opponents.

Proceeds

And both sides will also be looking to surpass last season's charity proceeds when more than £2,000 was raised.

Both teams will take to the field in new sponsored kits.

All proceeds from shirt sales, gate receipts and a raffle will go to the charity funds.

The fun starts at 7pm, with refreshments available all night followed by free post-game entertainment from local live band, Monkey Business.

For more information contact the club on 01384 395000 or John Slim on 07989 786913.

All set for the big clash, from left, club president Andy Whitfield, Lions Threes captain John Slim, Lions Twos captain James Metaxus and senior vice-president Ian Faulks

Stern test survived in race for promotion

Stourbridge Juniors

West Hagley U12 2 Stourbridge U12B 3

STOURBRIDGE'S promotion ambitions survived a stern test at West Hagley.

Both teams tried to play good football on a difficult pitch and Stourbridge came under early pressure with keeper Cris McGrath forced in to a good save.

Hagley had the greater possession, but Stourbridge created the better chances and it Ritchie Cartwright's strike put the visitors ahead.

The second half was a different affair with Stourbridge taking the game to Hagley and increasing the lead after Alex Clarke carried the ball for 40 yards before firing into the net.

Hagley reduced the arrears from the penalty spot, but Clarke's through ball was converted off the far post by Jamie Stanton to restore the two-goal advantage.

Stourbridge then hit bar and post before Hagley scored a late consolation.

Stourbridge U13B 4 Stourbridge Glassboys U13 2

Stourbridge Juniors hit back from a goal behind to beat the Glassboys.

Conner Fowkes produced the equaliser and Brooke Price netted from the penalty spot.

Stourbridge extended their lead in the second half with a goal from Sam Green and then added a fourth when Jack Davies scored.

The Glassboys came back with another goal but it was Stourbridge Juniors who took the points to extend their unbeaten run to 11 games.

Cup semi-final result: Stourbridge U16B 0 Netherton Colts U16 4.

White Lions get through to final

Kinver Girls U14 0 Sedgley White Lions Girls U14 3

SEDGLEY reached their second final of the season with this last-four Merit Shield success.

They took the lead after 15 minutes when Olivia Riese squared the ball to unmarked Bethany Male and scored again in the second period when Male's corner was met by Khloe Hyde.

Sedgley scored a fine third when Jodie Perkins put Britanee Davies through on goal for a good finish.

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SPORT

Big night
Rugby teams set for charity clash
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No Mersey
Jones blasts his way to ABA semi-finals
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Sports Desk 01902 319461 e-mail: chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Wonder Woffy is champ at last

WOLVES hero Tai Woffinden took his maiden British championship and immediately set his sights on Scott Nicholls' record seven wins.

Woffinden made up for the agony of previous defeats – he has twice led the grand final only for the race to be stopped and miss out in the rerun – to get the better of reigning champion Nicholls in the shoot-out at Monmore Green.

He becomes the first Wolves star to take the crown while riding for the gold and black.

Woffinden dedicated Monday's victory to his late father Rob, who died of cancer in 2010, and to former Grand Prix rider Lee Richardson.

Monday's meeting came on the first anniversary of Richardson's death following a track crash in Poland.

"I'd like to dedicate this to Lee and my dad," said Woffinden, who ran into the arms of his mother Sue after clinching the title.

"It's been a long time coming and I've finally done it," added the rider, who has finished third in the championship four times in the past five years.

"I just can't explain how happy I am! I want to say thanks to the Wolves supporters. I hope this is the first of many, and I'd like to set a goal of breaking Scott's record over my career."

Woffinden had five wins from five in the qualifying races before jetting clear from the tapes in the grand final to beat Nicholls and three-time champion Chris Harris. Surprise package Craig Cook was fourth.

Burch is first back for club

STOURBRIDGE Running Club had three entrants in the Manchester Marathon.

Their first runner back was Steven Burch, who clocked three hours 54 minutes.

Next was Natalie Dellar (4:09) who was using the marathon as a training run for her forthcoming 100km race, while Errol Cumberbatch stopped the clock in 4:10.

Two club members took part in the Market Drayton 10km event.

Out of 1,404 runners taking part, Kieran Pitt was 157th in 41 minutes 56 seconds while Burch finished 419th in 47:49.

A close-run thing but Stour edge to victory

Cricket

Water Orton 101, Stourbridge 103-8.
Stourbridge won by two wickets

STOURBRIDGE firsts collapsed for the second consecutive match – but inched to victory, ***writes Harilal Patel.***

Chasing Water Orton's modest 101, Stour slipped to 63-4. It was left to the middle order and tail to take their side to victory after a tense chase to the finishing line.

This second victory kept Stourbridge fifth in Division Two of the Birmingham and District Premier after back-to-back promotions from the Worcestershire County League.

Home skipper Richard Bradley won the toss for the third time and asked the opposition to bat. Water Orton's first pair saw off the opening spell from Matt Bradley, bowling from the football stand end.

Bradley was replaced by 17-year-old Ali Shah, who rewarded his skipper with three top wickets in his seven-over spell. Jason Bassnet was pinned lbw for seven; Mathew Dawes had his stumps shattered for five and Shah also took the key wicket of Warren Badger, caught behind for 30.

Left-hand spinner Audy Alexander then ripped through the middle order with only Alex Glastonbury (18) showing any resistance before being caught off Jitesh Patel as Water Orton were out for 101 off 39 overs.

However, they struck back when opening bowlers Matthew Ringin and Lesroy Irish soon had Stour's first four batsmen back in the pavilion. Alex Bingham fell to Ringin and Matt Bradley to Irish, both without scoring.

Alexander stabilised the innings with Adam Lawley and had made 15 before Ringin produced a brute of a full-length delivery to shatter his stumps.

Lawley took a very slow departure from the crease when adjudged caught behind for 15 to a wide delivery from Irish. When the skipper became Ringin's third victim, given out lbw, Stour's innings was in tatters.

Steve Game and Jitesh Patel were calm and purposeful and put on 34 before the former stroked a Richard Morgan delivery square of the wicket only to be caught by the diving Ringin for 15. Stour's position was precarious and Greg Jones was bowled by Morgan for one.

Patel was then bowled for 14 by Morgan with his side still 24 short of the target.

James Winders joined James Wood and under intense pressure edged Stour home.

More cricket – Page 39

LAST-GASP DEFEAT IS A SAXONS SICKENER

Rugby union

Stourbridge Saxons 26 Worthing Raiders 28

STOURBRIDGE'S dream of promotion glory turned into a last-gasp nightmare when Worthing snatched victory deep in injury time.

The dramatic finale to the Saxons' season produced a nailbiter of a game in front of a bumper crowd.

The lead had already changed hands seven times before Worthing's try late in injury time levelled the scores and the conversion secured both the game and promotion.

The Saxons were left with nothing and remain in National League Two North for the 2013/14 season.

Jamie Hearn opened the scoring with a well-struck penalty after a powerful Saxons' scrum drive saw the visitors' front row stand up under pressure.

Worthing's free running backs hit back with a try for winger Jack Maslen.

A Worthing infringement allowed Hearn to reduce the deficit to a point and gradually the Saxons exerted pressure, direct running from centres Ben Barkley and Will Hurrell forced Worthing to double-team their midfield defences.

Kicked

The penalty count started to mount in the Saxons' favour, and referee Nick Cockburn eventually lost patience and produced a yellow card for Worthing centre Oliver Richards' deliberate knock-on.

The Saxons kicked it for the corner and a series of drives worked enough space for winger Nathan Bressington to crash through. Hearn kicked a magnificent touchline conversion.

But the Saxons were caught napping as a fumbled restart catch was recovered by Worthing and their man-of-the match, scrum half Joe Govett, evaded some slack defending to scuttle under the posts and regain the lead. Bressington's foot just drifted into touch while rounding a defender and it was scant consolation when Hearn's penalty put Saxons 16-14 up at half-time.

A ruck infringement enabled Worthing to benefit from a sudden squall to find touch deep in the Saxons' 22 and the home pack were then shunted back over their own line from a catch and drive, second row Scott Barlow securing the try.

Stourbridge responded when a catch and drive was just held out but Will Hurrell burst through two defenders to level the scores from Sione Tu'ipolotu's switch pass and Hearn's conversion put them two up.

With just 10 minutes to go Hearn put the Saxons within touching distance of victory with a penalty.

But with barely a minute to go Saxons conceded a penalty. Worthing kicked to the corner and launched a wave of attacks.

From a scrum a Saxons hand in the ruck gave them another opportunity and No.8 Rob Smith crashed through to score under the posts. Govett made no mistake with the kick.

Flanker Ejike Uzoigwe dances through the Worthing defence as Stourbridge attack

Will Hurrell capitalises on Sione Tu'ipolotu's pass to grab the Saxons' second try

'We will be back' vows Mitchell after agony

STOURBRIDGE director of rugby Neil Mitchell declared: "We'll be back" after Saxons' last-gasp agony.

A late converted try in the play-off against Worthing ended the club's hopes of promotion from National Two North.

But Mitchell maintains that the Saxons will rebuild.

"It was bitterly disappointing to lose in the 83rd minute from being five points up," he said. "Though there was almost an inevitability to it when we tried to run the clock down.

"It seemed the gods were playing with us, the way the wind and rain blew in the second half.

"But a play-off is always a gamble and, to be fair, Worthing are a good side who always looked capable of scoring.

"We've no one to blame but ourselves, though. After the way our campaign started, we should have gone up as champions.

"In a strange way, though, that also contributed to our downfall when complacency set in.

"It's very hard for everybody involved but we'll see how many of the squad we retain, rebuild and start again. We'll be back."

Bookies putting on Jackett as favourite

KENNY JACKETT has been interviewed by Wolves as the club streamline their search for a head coach.

Sources say the 51-year-old was the first candidate to be formally spoken to by the board as they form a shortlist to succeed Dean Saunders. Former England manager Steve McClaren was another.

Jackett was understood to have applied for the Wolves post soon after resigning as Millwall manager 10 days ago and within hours of Saunders' sacking.

The former Watford and Swansea boss was immediately installed as the bookies' favourite to replace Saunders.

Although polls suggest he isn't necessarily the most popular choice among Wolves supporters, Jackett ticks many boxes for the club.

At 51, he has the experience required for such a high-pressure job and has managed successfully at the level Wolves now occupy – League One.

Jackett is one of several candidates chief executive Jez Moxey and director of football operations and recruitment Kevin Thelwell have identified.

He joins McClaren and Owen Coyle on the list of possibles.

But the club insist they will take all the time needed to get the right man.

Sheffield United defender Tony McMahon believes his old Middlesbrough boss McClaren would make an ideal choice.

"If Wolves could get him it would be a great coup for them," he said.

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